



Thursday, July 23, 2015

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LOST LOOS DEBATE IS REVIVED

Report by Rob Cox



Paul Brothwood by the loos

Probe into tragedy at beauty spot

AN investigation is being launched by Dudley Council after a man died after wading into a pool at a nature reserve to retrieve a ball.

The tragedy happened when the 25-year-old failed to resurface at Middle Pool at Fens Pool Nature Reserve, Pensnett, on Sunday.

Dominic Rowley, 31, from Brierley Hill, saw the drama unfold. He said: "We were sitting on the bank and saw a man and woman with one or two kids. A football went in the water and he started walking in after it. The ball was only five or six feet out but the ball went further and further and within 10 seconds he went under. He never resurfaced."

"I phoned the ambulance. Police turned up and then paramedics. They waded in with long poles and life jackets but he was under the water for at least 45 minutes before they got him back out."

Resuscitation attempts were made on the man before he was taken to hospital in a critical condition. His name had not been revealed at the time The Chronicle went to press.

Dudley Council's deputy leader Judy Foster confirmed an investigation would be taking place.

Arrest after car careers into workmen

TWO workmen were hit by a car after it careered into them as they worked on an electrical communications box in Coseley.

One of the workmen, in his late 20s, suffered serious head injuries and was airlifted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham in a critical condition.

The other, believed to be in his early 20s, suffered serious facial and arm injuries and was taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

A 16-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving after the crash in John Holden Avenue on Monday. Police say two people were in the car at the time and they both fled the scene.

The crash happened near the junction with Robert Wynd in Woodcross.

People rushed to help the injured workmen after the grey Citroen Picasso hit them.

Police put a cordon around the area as they carried out their investigations. Debris from the damaged communications box was left strewn across the road.

Anyone with information should call 101.

UKIP's Councillor Brothwood said: "I would like to hear people's views on this. I was elected to represent people in this ward, not my own views, and the toilets belong to me."

"When I first found out about the proposal I thought it seemed a good idea for someone to come in and buy something not in use. But I have been thinking again since and once they have gone – although they are not currently in use – they will not be built again."

"There will be different administrations at the council and should we become the lead group we would actively campaign to see public toilets reopened."

The decision to sell the site follows a review of the council's unused public conveniences by officers.

But Councillor Brothwood says the authority has a duty to provide local services and he believes having public toilets could help bring trade and business into the area.

He added: "It's a real shame we have seen public conveniences close throughout the borough and left in a derelict state."

Necessary

"The only way we will get people back into places like Wordsley and Kingswinford and Brierley Hill is by offering the necessary facilities."

Dudley councillor Hilary Bills, who is in charge of environmental services, said: "The block has been identified as surplus to requirements following a review into under-used public toilets across the borough."

"Ward members are currently being consulted on the future of the former toilets in Lawnswood Road, Wordsley, and we very much welcome their feedback in the appropriate way. We are happy to be flexible with the deadline, within reason, to make sure they have their say."

We're really going to miss you, Miss!



Carol Green, a teacher at Bellevue Primary School in Wordsley, is retiring after 40 years teaching, 25 years of which were at Bellevue

Teacher is retiring

A TEACHER who spent a total of 40 years at two primary schools within a mile of each other is set to retire.

Carol Green worked at Brook Primary in Wordsley for 15 years before moving down the road to Bellevue Primary, where she has been employed for 25 years.

After four decades in the education system popular Mrs Green retired at the end of term last Friday.

Mrs Green, aged 62, said: "When I started out they were the days of blackboards."

"I can remember the first computer with floppy disks the size of exercise books. It was very different back then."

"But some of the main changes

have been the politicians, who keep interfering. I think politicians should be kept out of education and let the people who really know what's going on take it forward."

At Bellevue, in Lawnswood Road, her 25-year stint meant she had taught two generations of the same family. Mrs Green spent time working as an information and communications technology co-ordinator and enjoyed the diversity in teaching in a primary school.

"The variety is absolutely brilliant and that suited me perfectly," she said.

One of her highlights was the installation of a sculpture trail at Belle Vue which she described as a brilliant community occasion.

SCHOOLS

Pupils' meal cost goes up 10p a day

FAMILIES will have to fork out extra for school meals in Dudley from September.

The price charged for a meal in all primary and special schools across the borough will increase by 10p – from £2 to £2.10 a day. This equates to £10.50 per week.

Prices for individually priced food in primary and secondary schools will rise by five per cent from the start of the new school year. The increase will bring in an extra £150,000 per annum for the council, which bosses say will cover food, energy and staff costs.

PARKING

Work takes place to improve car park

LONG-AWAITED work to improve a multi-storey car park in Stourbridge is being carried out this week.

Resurfacing work on the ramps at the Ryemarket car park began on Sunday and will continue on evenings throughout this week. Dudley Council said work to weatherproof the ramps will be carried out on a Sunday when conditions are dry.

Stourbridge MP Margot James had urged the council to make improvements to the town centre car park.

HOLIDAYS

Chief is criticised over parent fine call

OFSTED'S chief inspector has been told to 'come out of the 19th century' after calling for parents to face stiffer fines for sending children out of school in term time.

As the summer holiday began, Sir Michael Wilshaw called for tougher penalties. But Councillor David Sparks, chairman of the Local Government Association and former leader of Dudley Council, said the power should be handed to head teachers for 'common sense' to prevail.

Councillor Sparks said: "Wilshaw should come out of the 19th century, when everybody was governed by the hours of the mill, the mine and the foundry."

INSIDE

HIPPODROME MEMORIES



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Motorway business hub plan ditched



Happy — James Morris MP

PLANS for an enterprise zone beside a stretch of the M5 in Halesowen have been dropped in what is being hailed as a victory for 'people power'.

Dudley Council was exploring the possibility of transforming land near junction 3 of the motorway, near Halesowen, into a hub for businesses.

But the proposals faced a fierce backlash from campaigners who feared part of the green belt would be swallowed up.

At a meeting of Dudley Council on Monday it was agreed to scrap the plans which had sought to create around 6,000 jobs.

Council leader Pete Lowe, said: "Given the clear level of concern over the junction 3 proposals I have decided to recommend to the council that the proposed feasibility exercise be removed fully. I will advise where we continue work to deliver enterprise zones in Brierley Hill and elsewhere as promised by the Chancellor in the run up the election, to build on the work this council has done at the Business Investment Zone at The Waterfront."

"This is a clear indication that this council will listen to the wishes of the communities we represent."

An online petition called Save Halesowen's Countryside had been signed by 3,532 people and a further petition set up by Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris, had gathered 937 signatures.

Conservative MP Mr Morris hailed the council's U-turn a victory for 'people power'. He said: "I am relieved and happy to hear that Dudley Council have finally caved in on their plans to look at an industrial park on Halesowen's greenbelt."

"From the very beginning these plans were ill-thought out and plain daft."

£17m being spent on empty council homes

MORE than £17 million is being spent maintaining hundreds of empty council homes in Dudley borough.

Dudley Council used the money to ensure the properties are safe and secure. There are currently 633 empty council houses in the borough.

Meanwhile, 2,370 people remain on the authority's waiting list.

Council officials said they have an increasing backlog of properties which it has found difficult to let. They also say there have been problems letting high rise flats and three bedroom maisonettes.

Housing boss Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "Void properties are a major issue for any landlord and we certainly do all we can to ensure that empty properties are filled as quickly as possible. "However, as the biggest provider of homes in the borough there is a balance to strike between getting void properties back into use and maintaining and improving tenanted homes. The work we do on council properties is part of our wider commitment as a local authority to provide good quality homes across the borough."

Necessary maintenance includes electricity tests, rewiring, plastering and clearing gardens.

Decline

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of the council's Conservative opposition, said the root cause of the £17.2m bill had been long-term tenants who have allowed the condition of their homes to decline.

He said: "What we would like to see is the council introduce a five year tenancy agreement. That doesn't mean at the end of the agreement an old lady is kicked out of her home but, after five years, if someone has point blank refused access for the council to come in and keep the property up-to-date then we can review their tenancy. It would also make it far easier to deal with anti-social behaviour."

In June last year the council announced a £15m project to refurbish council homes. It includes work on empty homes to enable them to be re-let. Since it began the number of people on the waiting list has fallen from 4,191 to 2,370 but the number of empty homes has risen from around 570 to 633 over the same period.

Do you mind if we just barge in?



The Age UK Dudley Springboarders Drama Group featuring Chris Priest, top, May Hillman, left, and Fran Cartwright PENSIONERS joined in the fun as a host of events were held at an Age UK centre to celebrate Black Country Day.

It was faggots and paeas all round on the Waterfront in Brierley Hill as around 80 people attended to join in a range of events organised by Age UK's springboard team. Celebrations are going on all month.

A local drama group took advantage of the canalside setting, performing their show About a Barge – completely in Black Country di-

alct – while Black Country poet Dave Reeves also entertained the visitors.

They also witnessed a performance from a ballroom dancing group and a Black Country-themed quiz rounded off the regional celebrations.

Fran Cartwright, who is part of the Brierley Hill springboard team, said their clients, who were aged from 50 to 93, enjoyed the day.

She said: "We did a celebration for Black Country Day last year.

"It was such a success we wanted to repeat it and reach more people.

"The clients come here to the activity centre during the week and they had a wonderful time.

"Many of them are still talking about it now.

"They had faggots and paeas and tea."

With many of the people in attendance having spent much of their lives in the Black Country, the team thought it was important to allow them to join in the fun.

Care homes facing extra costs due to wage rises

CARE home owners in the West Midlands will struggle to cope with the introduction of a higher minimum wage, they claim.

Debbie Le Quesne, chief executive of West Midlands Care Association (WMCA), which represents private sector care providers, warned the industry was at 'breaking point'.

She said although employers welcomed better pay rates, it will add £23 per week to the care cost of every Midlands person in residential care.

She said that Chancellor George Osborne's Budget had done no favours to the care industry in the Midlands.

"Most domiciliary providers are on set local authority contracts which have seen next to nothing in increases over the past five years," she explained.

Savings

"They are still trying to work out how to find funds to pay travel time and now a second increase in outgoings looms.

"Calculations do not include external price rises we expect to see from our suppliers, who will also need to pass on their increased production costs," she added.

"There simply isn't anywhere for extra savings to be made. Years of austerity have taken their toll and the creative thinking is through."

"The Local Government Association, which represents more than 400 authorities in England and Wales, said the cost of implementing the policy should be taken into account when council funding levels are set in future."

Hall is revealed in evening tours

HIMLEY Hall will be opening doors to rooms usually closed to the public in evening guided tours until September.

Visitors will get glimpse behind the scenes, from the butler's sitting room to the Earl of Dudley's bedrooms, as well as the refurbished North Wing complete with an art deco-style swimming pool room and cinema bar.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "Himley has such a colourful past that there is a strong local fascination with its history. Every time the hall offers guided tours we learn something new."

The tours cost £7.20 per person including refreshments and start between 7.15 and 7.30pm. Places need to be booked by calling (01384) 817817.

Police stepping up patrols at park

YOBs have been riding off-road bikes through a Kingswinford park prompting a police crackdown.

Officers have stepped up patrols at the beauty spot, also known as King George VI Park, after residents complained bikers were riding on grassed areas.

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Hundreds of children waiting to be adopted

MORE than 300 children across the West Midlands are waiting to be adopted, according to new figures – 40 are waiting in Dudley alone.

There are 80 children in Wolverhampton, 20 in Sandwell, 40 in Dudley, 40 in Walsall, plus 95 in Staffordshire and 40 in Worcestershire.

There are potential new families available but many people are waiting for more than six months to get approved as adopters after they apply.

The Government has launched a website featuring maps of areas with the biggest demand for adoptive parents. Chiefs say there are often more potential adopters available than there are children waiting but council boundaries can hold up the process.

In Dudley, 10 families were approved for adoption from April to December 2014, but none of these were given the green light within six months. Of the 15 approved in Walsall in the same period, 10 were within six months, compared to five of the 20 in Sandwell. Thirty out of the 60 families in Staffordshire were approved in six months.

It comes after Wolverhampton revealed an average of 673 days between a child entering care and moving in with a family. The target is 548.

Figures show 690 children are waiting across the whole of the West Midlands, many having spent months in care. In 2014-15, 460 children in the West Midlands were found a permanent home.

Visit www.first4adoption.org.uk/ or call 0300 2220022.

Ward is praised for its care levels

A MENTAL health ward in the Black Country has been rated as excellent by authorities.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust got the level 1 rating from AIMS (Accreditation for Acute Inpatient Mental Health Services) for the Client Ward, at Bushey Fields Hospital in Dudley.

The assessors found the ward environment, facilities and staff attitude were all of the highest standard. They also praised the team's communication, creative thinking and emphasis on continued training.

AIMS is a partnership between the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Psychological Society, the College of Occupational Therapists and the Royal College of Nursing.

Beefeater gets a £250k makeover

A RESTAURANT in Kingswinford has been given a £250,000 revamp, creating five jobs. The Kingswinford Beefeater in Dudley Road has been refurbished with booth seating, revamped bar area and new menu.

Arboretum memorial for Gulf War troops



An artist's impression of the memorial

A PERMANENT memorial for troops who died in the Gulf War will be unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas in February.

It will be built in memory of 47 men who died in the conflict, including Shauna Taylor, of Stourbridge, and Kieran Duffy, from Kidderminster.

Volunteers have generated more than £70,000 but the fundraising is continuing, with organiser Michael Rowley riding a motorcycle from the arboretum to the home towns and cities of all 47 men killed in the conflict to boost the fund, from August 16.

An event to unveil the memorial is planned for February 28, 2016, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the end of the conflict.

Mr Rowley said it had been a 'long road' to raise the cash to give the fallen a tribute they deserve but groundwork would begin later this year at the site. He added: "This memorial to the 47 lost is 20 years overdue."

Other fundraising events are being staged to boost coffers and pay for the upkeep of the memorial at the arboretum near the A38 in Alrewas,

Staffordshire. A night of music will be held at the Parkes Hall Social Club in Parkes Hall Road, Dudley, on August 8 from 7pm. Volunteers will take part in a charity tandem parachute jump on August 12 in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Among donations was £25,000 from the Ambassador of Kuwait.

The conflict saw coalition forces from 34 nations, led by the United States, fight Iraq after that country's invasion of Kuwait.

The memorial will be made up of three metal structures and will incorporate the names of those who died.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Teddy bear picnic time at museum

YOUNG visitors to Broadfield House Glass Museum will be in for a big surprise this afternoon (Thursday).

The Kingswinford attraction is hosting a teddy bears picnic as part of an under-fives day from noon until 4pm.

Families can bring along their favourite picnic treats and blankets to enjoy lunch in the grounds of the glass museum. Youngsters can take part in storytelling sessions and craft activities.

Admission to the museum is free. For details call (01384) 812745.

Anger as vandals tear down tree

A TREE has been attacked by yobs in Lye town centre.

The tree in High Street was torn down on a front lawn outside some flats.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We received a report of a vandalised semi-mature silver birch tree in High Street, Lye and sent officers out to inspect the damage. Given the tree's location, the damage sustained and its condition, we removed it. We rely on people reporting these mindless yobs to police as soon as possible."

Open day after Roseland revamp

A REFURBISHED community centre is hosting an open day for people to find out more about the facilities on offer.

Roseland House in Dudley has undergone a major refurbishment and now has full disabled access and toilets, along with space for community activities including a new garden room, kitchen and cafe. The centre is available seven days a week, including evenings. The open day is on Wednesday, July 29, from 10am until 4pm.

Volunteers needed for latest hospice shop

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help run a new charity shop opening in Dudley town centre at this month.

The latest Mary Stevens Hospice shop, at units 209 and 211 High Street, will open to the public on July 31.

A chain of shops across the Black Country raise funds to support the Stourbridge hospice.

Anyone who would like to help in the shop can contact Mary Stevens Hospice Trading on (01384) 671149.

Cider and sausages

A LYC brewery is putting on a cider event during a nearby beer festival.

A cider and sausage festival is to take place at Sadler's Brewhouse in Station Road, from August 13 to 16. Sadler's beers will be on sale at the Black Country Beer Festival at nearby Lye Cricket Club, August 13 to 15.

Conman duped way into plumbing lecturer post

A CONMAN from Stourbridge managed to get a job teaching plumbing students in the Black Country.

He duped bosses with false qualifications and went undetected for almost six months and many of his students had to be reassessed when his lies were revealed.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how Andrew Woodfield succeeded in getting the lecturing job at Walsall Training Centre by presenting qualifications that weren't his and were under a different name.

When asked about this, Woodfield claimed he had changed his name as he was adopted but had since reverted back to his original name.

The qualifications actually belonged to a man called Nicholas Davies, from Wrexham, North Wales. The pair had briefly come into contact in Birmingham. Mr Davies had no idea Woodfield was using his qualifications.

Students taking their NVQs under Woodfield's 'guidance' who achieved qualifications had to be reassessed.

The 45-year-old, of Queensway, Stourbridge, was paid £13,000 during his time at the centre.

Alarm bells began ringing for his boss Steve Edis, who had given him the job at the centre on Birches House Industrial Estate, when it was noticed that the date of birth was also different to that on the qualifications documents.

Angry

Woodfield's admitted that he did not have the relevant qualifications for the role. He was handed a 12-month prison sentence on last week, suspended for two years, after pleading guilty to fraud by false representation. He must complete 100 hours of unpaid work.

"All the students that were signed off had to be reassessed," Mr Edward Soulsby, prosecuting, said. "Nicholas Davies was contacted and was very angry when he was told somebody was passing off his qualifications as their own. It angered him that someone would lie their way through on his reputation."

The court heard that Woodfield has previously used false documents to obtain goods.

Judge Helen Hughes said: "You have indulged in serious deception. Students thought they had gained qualifications and must have been shocked and disappointed when they had to be reassessed."

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, defending, said no problems were ever raised about Woodfield's conduct while working at the centre.

Thea's making history this summer



Black Country schoolgirl Thea Hunt launches the English Heritage wish list at Kenilworth Castle

AN eight-year-old girl from Stourbridge has been appointed to a special role at English Heritage to give a 'kid's-eye' view of its historic buildings and monuments.

Thea Hunt has been made the charity's child executive officer in a bid to improve its events for families. Her first job was unveiling the results of a survey to find youngster's top history-inspired wishes.

Top on the list was the dream

of discovering hidden treasure, followed by a desire to be king or queen for a day, followed by the chance to sit on a throne. Thea will be tasked with making a number of these wishes a reality.

Emily Sewell, of English Heritage, said: "We already run a huge programme of great family events across the country but we wanted to make it even better this summer and the best way to do that is to put children in charge."

More than 500 children applied for the role and 50 were then interviewed. Bosses at English Heritage – which looks after sites including Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall – said Thea stood out for her passion, energy and generosity.

The Belle Vue School pupil said: "I can't wait to see the faces of children and their families when they're doing the events from our History Wish List."

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AS the Greek tragedy drags on a reader writes: "Have you noticed, when spoken quickly, how 'euros' sounds just like like 'IOUs'?"

BROTHERS, let us build the New Jerusalem on brownfield sites. Let us streamline the planning laws to allow all the houses we need to be constructed on the disused land of old factories, railway yards or quarries. The Government has spelt out its vision. What could possibly go wrong?

I'LL tell you what could go wrong. I was once shown an old Coal Board map of the known pit shafts, some more than 200 years old, in the Black Country. There were hundreds. In theory, the shafts were all sealed. In reality, some were covered with a few wooden planks and a load of soil. The moment you start digging into brownfield sites, you may hit all sorts of nasties. Pit shafts are merely one worry. It is not unknown for 21st century developers to discover 19th century cyanide lagoons. Occasionally, a vehicle plummets into an unknown chamber covered by turf. If Whitehall tears up the planning laws tomorrow, do not expect developers to rush for brownfield sites. They much prefer the predictable security of a nice green field.

IN a mean-spirited article for the *Guardian*, Jonathan Jones slagged off the official photographs of Princes Charlotte's christening, ridiculing "their faces lit up by hysterical joy, their hair wispy in the sun, their teeth shining like diamond walls of privilege, and their eyes betraying no signs of thought whatsoever." In other words, the



perfect christening snaps. It may come as news to the *Guardian* but most parents and grandparents want pictures showing their brood at its best, even if it does not reflect the absolute truth. This is why so many homes have framed photographs of Gavin on graduation day, proudly attired in gown and mortar board and clutching £27,000 worth of 2:2 BA in Media Studies. The truth is that Gavin spent most of his time at Uni face-down in an alcoholic haze and eventually landed a washing-up job at the abattoir. But who wants photos of all that? Family snaps are propaganda, not gospel.

A NEIGHBOUR told me she was expecting a bumper crop of gooseberries this year and seemed surprised when I grimaced. Seriously, does anyone really enjoy gooseberries? My stomach turns at the very thought of the texture, the taste and those obscene little prickles. It's like biting into a hairy eyeball with the aftertaste of earwax.

The neighbour says a pot of her gooseberry jam will change my mind. Wanna bet? And do not get me started on guacamole.

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Landlord fined over hazards at house

A LANDLORD who failed to make safety improvements to a property he rented out to a family has been fined.

Electrical hazards, an unsafe out-building, a dilapidated external staircase, as well as damp and mould were found at the house in Dudley owned by Balraj Singh Timana, from Claregate in Wolverhampton.

He had been issued with an im-

provement notice on June 12, 2014, and given 12 weeks to comply.

But he did not carry any of the work needed at the three-bedroom house in Dudley.

Notice

Timana pleaded guilty to failing to comply with an improvement notice and was fined £4,750 at Dudley Magistrates on July 9.

He was also ordered to pay council costs of £1,492.50, along with a victim surcharge of £120.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, Dudley Council's cabinet member for housing, said: "This was a particularly worrying case as there were children living in the premises and the landlord had done nothing at all to comply with the notice."

"The staff in private sector hous-

ing work extremely hard to ensure the health and welfare of borough tenants, which is shown in their vigilance in getting another case to a successful outcome.

"It is the second case in as many months and highlights our commitment to making sure that landlords who fail to keep their properties up to a safe standard will be prosecuted."

Molineux return for Liquidator is ruled out

WOLVES have confirmed that they have no plans to play *The Liquidator* this season after an online petition to lift the club ban on the tune.

Fan Jason Haycock has set up the petition on change.org calling on West Midlands Police to lift the ban on playing the track — and it has been signed by more than 1,700 people.

However, the club has confirmed it was a decision taken by them, not the police, and they will not change the policy. The club stopped playing the pre-match reggae instrumental after it was hijacked by some supporters shouting obscenities.

The petition states: "Many English clubs still continue to play this song as a way of rousing the crowd at their stadiums. For reasons known only to West Midlands Police it was banned at Molineux but not *The Hawthorns*, amongst many other grounds. It's synonymous with Wolves and we should work together to get the ban lifted and get part of our club back!"

Family

Club spokesman Matt Grayson, said: "We know some fans would like *The Liquidator* to return and we're always addressing questions on the topic.

"We're a family club and the fact is that when we play *The Liquidator* it unfortunately results in bad language. There's no change to the club's position and we have no plans to play *The Liquidator* this season. It's the club's decision and it isn't a police matter."

Disabled spaces get a guarantee

PARKING bays for blue badge holders will be set aside when 91 council workers move offices. Fears of parking chaos had been expressed over the move by more staff to the Mere Centre in Lawnswood Road, Wordsley.

Councillor Derrick Hemingsley called for five bays to be allocated for disabled users of neighbouring Richardson Hall — a measure which has now been approved by council bosses.

Dudley Council deputy leader Judy Foster said: "This move has to balance the needs of staff with people in the area. As a community council we have worked very hard with ward councillors and the community to make sure their views are taken on board."

The move came after complaints of staff taking too many parking spaces at Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Park.

Terraced homes make way for new housing

TEN homes will be built in Lye after councillors backed the plans. The properties will be built by Frost Developments off Brook Street and Attwood Street, after a row of terraced houses were demolished. Off-street parking will be provided.

Badger bother as setts wreck gardens



Ex-mayor Rosemary Tomkinson looks at the badgers' sett at the bottom of her garden

BADGERS have caused havoc for a row of neighbours by creating huge holes like this in their gardens.

The hole at the top of Rosemary Tomkinson's garden in Seager's Lane, Brierley Hill, measures around three metres across.

And it is not just one garden but six in the street which have been badly affected by the burrowing badgers.

The road is three miles away from Short Street, Stourbridge, where residents have faced similar problems.

Mrs Tomkinson, aged 79, a former Dudley mayor, said her garden is a 'no-go' area now.

"I had plans for moving the old swing and doing things at that end of the garden but I cannot do that now," she said.

"One of the worst things was when they dug up all my tulip bulbs which my daughter had kindly planted for me. She had also done a display for me in the gazebo but the badgers came in and knocked it all over."

Mrs Tomkinson said she first noticed the holes in her neighbour's garden around two years ago.

At first she thought about filling the hole in her garden with dirt or rocks but was told doing so would be illegal. She then contacted Natural England but said she could not afford their proposed solutions which included chain-link and electrical fencing.

Although some parts of the country have had a cull of badgers to protect cows from bovine tuberculosis, badgers are a protected species.

Terraced homes make way for new housing

TEN homes will be built in Lye after councillors backed the plans.

The properties will be built by Frost Developments off Brook Street and Attwood Street, after a row of terraced houses were demolished. Off-street parking will be provided.

Cousins in court after 'pathetic' pub clash

THREE men behaved 'like children' during a row at a pub in the Black Country, according to a judge.

Cousins Thomas, Patrick and Anthony Doherty clashed with other customers at the Shireland Inn at Smethwick over a comment made about the wife of one of the men, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Poll cues were grabbed and men started pushing and shoving as tempers frayed. Then a snooker ball was thrown and one man tore off his shirt as rival factions goaded each other, said Mr Geoffrey Dann, prosecuting.

A bar stool was hurled across the pub as police officers arrived. The men involved in the altercation with the Dohertys slipped out by a back door, while the trio were arrested.

Suspended

Anthony Doherty, 31, and 25-year-old Patrick, both of High Street, Brierley Hill, each admitted affray. The elder, who has a job in Germany, was given an eight-month jail sentence suspended for 18 months and ordered to pay £800 costs. Patrick Doherty received a 12-month prison term suspended for the same period, with £150 court costs.

Thomas Doherty, 27, of Wyn-Griffith Drive, Tipton, pleaded guilty to a public order offence and was given a year community order under supervision with £150 costs.

Recorder Jason MacAdam said: "This was pathetic, childlike behaviour by all concerned. Men of your age should know better."

Owners of two food outlets fined

THE owners of two food outlets in Stourbridge have been ordered to pay thousands of pounds after environmental officers found hygiene failings.

Hayes Cafe, in Stour Vale Road, Lye, and Herbs & Spices Takeaway, Hagley Road, Stourbridge, were both found to be dirty and equipment was defective or poorly maintained.

Owners of both appeared at Dudley Magistrates Court and pleaded guilty to seven offences each under food hygiene regulations.

Muhammed Ahmad, owner of Herbs and Spices takeaway, was fined £4,669 and ordered to pay costs of £2,052.60 and a victim surcharge of £67. Andrew Newton, owner of Hayes Cafe, was fined £2,450, has to pay costs of £1,330.30 and a £35 victim surcharge.

Cannabis plants found at house

MORE than 160 cannabis plants were discovered by an electrical engineer carrying out a routine check at a Dudley house. Police seized cannabis found growing in two bedrooms and loft at a property in Richmond Road.

Staff sacked for too many sick days

SIXTEEN staff have been sacked by Dudley Council for taking too many sick days during the past 12 months.

New figures reveal sickness absence at the authority has risen to an average of two working weeks a year.

Council bosses said it was a 'last resort' to sack serial non-attendees and was only done when all other options had failed.

A total of 90,677.43 days were lost by workers taking sick days at the authority in 2014/15 – the equivalent of 248 years. This works out as an average of 10.26 days per full-time equivalent (FTE) member of staff.

Council bosses insisted they took action to reduce

staff sickness levels and 'a small number' of workers had lost their jobs because of repeated absence.

Last year in the UK, the average worker called in sick four times.

The Dudley figures include both council and school staff. The council employs around 8,836 FTE workers. In the 2013/14 the sickness rate worked out as an average of 9.52 days per FTE member of staff.

Duty

Councillor Judy Foster, cabinet member for corporate and customer services, said: "Our staff work very hard and frequently go above and beyond the call of duty to give the best possible service."

"It is the mark of a good employer that we provide support for staff when they need it through sickness or other pressures which may impact on their work. However, in a small number of cases, and as a last resort, we have had to end contracts where all other options have been explored and exhausted."

She added: "Dudley Council is dedicated to managing employee sickness through the implementation of an attendance management policy."

"The council is adopting a more comprehensive approach to managing attendance as part of a wider health, safety and wellbeing initiative, which is being introduced in conjunction with our colleagues from public health. We will continue to work to reduce the level of sickness as much as possible."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Former school now facing demolition

A SECONDARY school, which closed despite a battle to save it by parents, is set to be demolished.

Pensnett High School in Tiled House Lane shut its doors in August 2010 due to falling pupil numbers and poor exam results.

It is now set to be flattened to allow work on a new £1.6 million education centre for young people with learning difficulties.

Dudley Council has applied for permission to demolish the building.

The new centre will be run by Pens Meadow Special School.

Dedicated mother climbs mountain

A CAMPAIGNER whose son died of asbestos-related illness has raised £800 for charity by climbing the highest mountain in Wales and holding a vintage sale.

Mary Law, whose son Roy Shipley died in 2010, took on the challenge at Mount Snowdon to support Mesothelioma UK.

She opened the Arc-Aid charity shop in New Street, Dudley, four years ago but moved to a bigger unit in New Street last month.

And a vintage sale at The Crepe Station in Stone Street raised £183.

Friends staging charity concert

FOUR musical friends from Kingswinford are putting on a concert for charity.

The show called 'A Musical Send Off' is at The Crestwood School, Bromley Lane, on August 5. Proceeds will go towards Disability in Action.

Adam Smith, one of the performers, said: "It will be a sit down event with lots of familiar songs from the musicals that everyone can join in with."

Doors will open 6.30pm and tickets cost £5. Call 07889473452.

Baggeridge run being held for Action Heart

A 5km evening run is being held around the paths and trails at a country park, near Sedgley.

The Baggeridge 5K will be taking place on Thursday, August 6, at 7pm at Baggeridge Country Park, Gospel End. It is being organised by the Action Heart Running Club at Russells Hall Hospital, with proceeds to the Action Heart cardiac rehabilitation programme.

For details on how to enter contact (01384) 292233.

New venue for show

THE Black Country Fuchsia Society has a new venue for its annual show.

It is being held at The Hub, Griffiths Drive, Wednesfield, on August 1 from 12.30pm to 5pm. The society, which has been going for more than 30 years, holds monthly meetings from January to November.

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their service.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.'

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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The not so beautiful aspect of our game

IT hasn't been a great week for the Beautiful Game. We've had Raheem Sterling jumping up and down like a spoilt child because of Liverpool's reluctance to let him join moneybags Manchester City.

Then, Villa captain Fabian Delph decided to take a slice of Sheikh Mansoor's money, days after issuing a heartfelt pledge of loyalty and undying love for Tim Sherwood's side.

In an ideal world, Roy Hodgson would say that neither of these mercenaries would ever pull on the England shirt again, but we all know that is not going to happen. We now have radio pundits who trot out the old "no loyalty in football" cliché as if it something we should commend.

Then we come to West Bromwich Albion's new boy James McLean, who decided to voice his disapproval for all things English by turning his back on the St George's flag and refusing to sing the national anthem. Very mature, wouldn't you agree?

Apparently, young James is from a staunch Republican background in Northern Ireland. Previously, he refused to wear a Remembrance poppy in protest at Republicans killed by British soldiers during the Troubles.

Clearly, Mr McClean does not have much time for England, which of course, is his right.

However, since he finds this country so objectionable, perhaps he might consider why he is living and working here.

If he really wanted to demonstrate his Republican loyalties, he ought to shun the bright lights and riches of the Premier League, and try his luck at Carrick Rangers or Dungannon United. Now that would be a genuine display of principle.

■ ■ ■

SHOW me a motorist who has never broken a speed limit by 1mph, and I will show you a liar. Which is why we should all be very concerned about the plans for a new "zero tolerance" approach to speeding offences in Scotland.

Police Scotland plans to issue warning letters to anybody who is clocked exceeding the speed limit by just a single mile per hour, with fines and penalty points for anybody who is caught doing the same a second time.

At the moment it is part of a six-month "pilot study", with the threat that "if successful" it will be introduced in other parts of the UK, or "rolled out", to use the fashionable parlance.

We'll take that as read then.

In other words, within a year or so anyone found driving at 31mph in a 30 could very easily be fined. Get caught a few times doing 31mph, and you will probably be banned.

And as everybody does 31mph at some time or other, it will simply be a matter of luck who gets nabbed.

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Paul Whyley pictured with his daughters, Heather and Lauren



Paul with grandchildren Isabella, Rufus, Valentina and William



Eddie Redmayne as Stephen Hawking in The Theory of Everything

Oscar winner helped me spot my disease

Watching a film about Stephen Hawking, Paul Whyley realised he had the same symptoms, **ROB COX** reports

RELAXING in his cinema seat alongside his wife, Paul Whyley was enjoying Oscar nominated Stephen Hawking biopic *The Theory of Everything*, when a slow realisation came upon him.

For months the 62-year-old grandfather-of-four, had been having difficulty controlling his fingers, had problems moving his arm and experienced a number of trips and falls.

Doctors had been unable to come up with a diagnosis, and he had passed it off as an encroaching old age, but with mounting horror he realised that he was suffering the same symptoms as the character on screen.

He says: "The first problem I had as with my shoulder. I got numb fingers and sometimes I would drop my keys and there, on screen I saw Eddie Redmayne with similar symptoms. He was unable to control his fingers."

"In another scene they run through a list of all the symptoms associated with Motor Neurone Disease and I thought 'bloody hell, I have got every single one of them'."

"I had the dropped foot, although it was a bit dramatic in the film. He went keeling over with no control of anything but it doesn't get you like that; it is little things like tripping at first. I know because I have experienced it."

"There was the scene with the blackboard – he couldn't lift his arm and I used to get pain when drilling at work."

Sitting in the dark at the Odeon cinema at Merry Hill shopping centre he pushed the realisation to the back of his mind – unable even to share his fears with his wife.

But he sought advice and was told by a doctor that he needed a nerve conduction test to establish whether he had the disease.

After an agonising six-week wait to see a neurologist, it was confirmed. There is no cure



'It has been completely life-changing' — Paul Whyley, who has MND, with his wife Jayne

for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) and in Paul's case his condition has rapidly declined.

"It has been completely life-changing," admits Paul. "I am wheelchair-bound. My arms have virtually stopped working. My legs have gone."

"I am like a newborn baby. I can't do anything for myself."

"It has also put us under a lot of stress, on my wife particularly, probably more than me."

Paul watched the film with his wife Jayne just four months ago, in March this year, but with hindsight believes the disease – that progressively damages parts of the nervous system leading to muscle weakness – was having an impact as early as 2012.

He had noticed a sore shoulder while carrying out his work as a blind fitter, which only got worse over time.

He says: "You just think it is old age. When

you trip you think that is why, but it is because your feet drag. The muscle in your foot starts to get weak."

"I was working in Hereford and went to cough and I couldn't. I thought 'that is odd'. I could breathe OK but my diaphragm had started to go."

Paul, from Hagle, had originally become convinced his sore shoulder was linked to cancerous mole in the same place.

Jayne said he became 'transfixed' on the belief that everything was connected with the mole, which he then had removed.

But problems flared up again in February. While out on a job Paul felt his legs suddenly give way and he returned home still confused about his ill-health.

It was soon after when Paul, Jayne and friends went to watch *The Theory of Everything*. Paul admits it was not his first

choice but Jayne was fond of lead actor Eddie Redmayne, who won an Oscar for his portrayal of the young Stephen Hawking.

Since his diagnosis Paul's illness has taken a different trajectory to Hawking's, with his condition rapidly declining.

The father-of-two had been a keen pilot, taking to the skies up to twice a week from Halfpenny Green Airport, near Wolverhampton.

But the debilitating disease has now made even getting out of the house difficult.

Jayne says: "I am a constant carer. Paul has to be taken to the toilet, showered and washed. I can't just think 'oh, I'll pop to the shops'."

"When I am at the shops I am constantly on the clock thinking 'I need to get back, I need to get back'. It has changed everything."

Ventilator

Paul has a ventilator to assist his breathing through the night and takes tablets to slow the progression of the disease.

And his family and friends, including daughters Heather, 36 and Lauren, 34, and grandchildren, Isabella, eight, Rufus, three, Valentina, four, and William, six, are supporting him. They have set up a crowdfunding page to raise money for a stairlift to be installed at his home.

A summer fete was also held at Stourbridge's Greenfield Primary School to raise money to help the family.

Since Paul's incredible story of self-diagnosis came to light, his family have joked at the similarities in appearance between himself, Eddie Redmayne and Stephen Hawking.

But can the world-famous physicist act as an inspiration to others with MND? Maybe for some, but Paul recognises that he is an exceptional case.

"Unfortunately not for me," says Paul. "I am saying the wrong thing but he is unique."

"He has had the disease 50 years, defying all the odds, and is still alive now, with the disease still progressing."

"But he is an inspirational scientist and his fame helps raise awareness of Motor Neurone Disease."

To donate to Paul's fund visit <https://crowdfunder.justgiving.com/Paul-Whyley>

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Pitching tent in shopping centre raised awareness on struggle faced by refugees

ON Saturday, June 27, we did something I have never seen in Stourbridge before.

We pitched a tent of the sort refugee families who have lost their homes and everything they own in war and disasters would use for months, and maybe for years, as their only shelter – in the Ryemarke in Stourbridge.

Lionesses fall short of '66 heroes

YES, they did finish third but personally speaking I feel there was too much hype regarding England's performance in the recent Women's World Cup Tournament in Canada.

We had reports of a 'stunning performance', one girl was compared to the greatest footballer in the world Lionel Messi. If a pass went astray there was always an excuse. If anybody dared to say anything that was not considered praiseworthy, they were branded sexist, chauvinistic or from the Victorian era.

In the name of equality the FA are throwing money into the woman's game. This England side in Canada never wanted for anything, their 'back up' staff would not disgrace a Premiership side – yet what we got was nothing more than a typically hardworking English side. The Lionesses of today will never emulate the Lions of Wembley 1966.

A P CUFF
Stourbridge

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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EMAIL

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

It's history and it can't be changed

I find it difficult to accept Patrick Vernon's views on historical slavery, particularly when his energy could be better used in addressing the modern version.

I must declare an interest or two. My great great great grandmother was a slave on the remote South Atlantic island of St Helena. DNA testing indicates that she may have been of Asian or Mediterranean origin. Her relationship with an Irish captain in the East India Company Regiment led eventually to me and my family.

Fast forward to my youth – I was educated via a scholarship at a West Country school which was founded on the proceeds of the slave trade. Some say that this largesse on the part of the slave trader was conscience money.

I retain links with the school via the Old Boy's Society and with many of my contemporaries.

I have no hang-ups about any of this. I'm certainly not unique. It's history, my history, and it can't be changed.

Please, Mr Vernon, direct your energies towards the present and future of the inhuman slave trade.

T RIDGE
Sedgley

Chains are a reflection of heritage

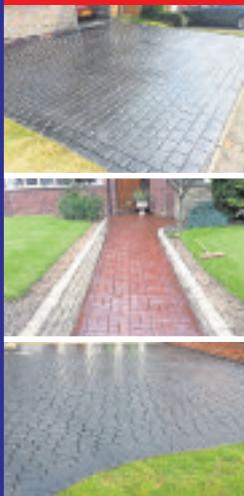
DON'T confuse political correctness with misjudgement over the Black Country flag. Whilst it is true that some chains made before the 20th Century would have been used by slave owners to enslave Africans, it wasn't their only use, nor is it the chains that do the oppressing. People oppress other people. Plantation owners, slave traders and imperial capitalists all got rich out of the barbarism of slavery.

Context is important for imagery. The image of chains being broken by human hands is often associated with humans liberating themselves from some form of oppression. It is not the chains that break by themselves but humans that achieve the liberation.

A chain image can be used to symbolize linking people together in unity. Context is everything. In the Black Country flag the chain is merely a symbol of industrial heritage of the region.

TONY BARNSLEY
Halesowen

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Help call to trace final branches of family tree

A FORMER head boy from the Royal Wolverhampton School has appealed for help to track down the final branches of his family tree.

Retired NHS manager Lewis Payne, aged 68, has been working on his family history since September with his sons Giles and Stuart.

While he has managed to assemble a thorough chronicle of the vast majority of his relatives, there are a handful who remain outstanding.

One of those is his great-aunt Edith Richardson, who he believes died in Wolverhampton in the 1960s.

A previous appeal in a Stoke-on-Trent newspaper helped Mr Payne find out details about two of his great-uncles – including Mrs Richardson's husband Arthur, a wood sawyer.

He also managed to flesh out what he knew about his great-uncle Roland, a baker.

Forward

However, Mrs Richardson remains something of a mystery.

Mr Payne has been unable to work out if she and Arthur had children and is asking readers who may have known Mrs Richardson to come forward.

Mr Payne, of Norton, Stourbridge, said: "Of the 10 calls following the publication of that article in Stoke one was about Arthur.

"It was from an 89-year-old lady who said she thought her uncle and my great-uncle had been drinking partners. But trying to trace the records of Edith Richardson has been really hard, not just for me but for a couple of genealogy experts."

"The best we've got is that she died in Wolverhampton in June 1965. She is one of only three people in the whole tree we're not absolutely sure about."

Mr Payne – who used to work in a



Lewis Payne's great grandfather



Lewis, his father and his granddad



Lewis Payne is looking for help to trace a missing branch of his family tree management role at both the Royal Hospital and New Cross – has put together a biography of each of the people featured in the family tree and after compiling such a painstaking record he is desperate to complete it.

"It would be nice to think the family could carry this forward into the future," he said. "We started doing it based on information my mother and father had prepared in their lifetimes. "When you start doing something like this you either do it properly and thoroughly or don't do it at all.

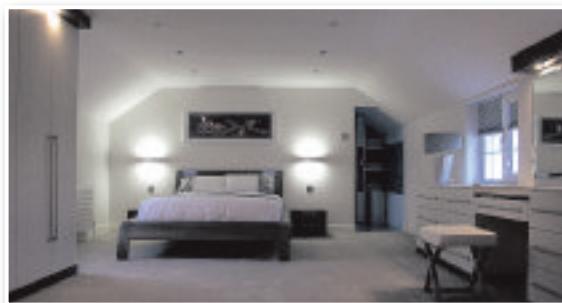
"We've made very good progress and have found family members all around the world and they've all been extraordinarily helpful."

Anyone with information to help Mr Payne's search can call 01384 375121.

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Family fled as fire ripped through home



Karen Hickman, Mr Hickman's sister, surveys the damage at the living room of the home in Brockmoor

A FAMILY of five, their dog and two pet tortoises had to be rescued from a fire that tore through a Brierley Hill home.

Selina Adams managed to escape the property in Brockmoor with her children after being woken by neighbours. Her pets were rescued by firefighters, although one of the tortoises died. Miss Adams and her four children, Billy-Joe,

six months, Trinity, two, Harley-Jack, three, and Preston, four, were sleeping in a downstairs room when the fire took hold. Her partner Kieran Hickman was out taking the couple's other children, Leigha and Ellie, to school.

Fifteen firefighters tackled the blaze and fire officers were investigating the cause.

2016 start for quarry work

DEVELOPERS behind a plan to transform a disused quarry into a residential area hope to begin work on the site next year.

FCC Environment is targeting early 2016 to start the major scheme, which would see the Edwin Richards Quarry at Rowley Regis filled in and 281 homes built on its southern edge. The firm has been given permission

by Sandwell Council to go ahead with the project but has said issues with underground gas need to be investigated before any work can begin.

FCC has also confirmed that household waste will not be used to fill in the quarry as had been planned. Soil and non-hazardous materials will instead go into the ground. The scheme could take up to 30 years to complete but it is hoped the homes could be completed during the next decade.

Rowley Regis councillor Chris Tranter said he supported plans to develop the quarry, as the area needed affordable homes, but raised concerns about the impact of lorries travelling to the site.

He added: "We did have our fears allayed somewhat at the latest public consultation but I have still got reservations. The amount of lorries coming to and from the site is going to have an effect."

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Dolphin therapy hope to aid Elle Mae recovery

A WOLVERHAMPTON pupil who suffered a brain haemorrhage in 2013 is working with dolphins in Florida to help with her recovery.

Elle-Mae-Davidson, who was 16 when she suffered the life changing haemorrhage, is undertaking Dolphin Therapy for two weeks at the Dolphin Rehab Centre in Key Largo, Florida Keys.

Miss Davidson's family have been wanting to take their daughter to the centre for a long time and it was with the support of Blakelands Country House, near Wombourne, and the charity Promise Dreams, that the family have been able to make their daughter's dreams come true.

Leah Davidson, Miss Davidson's Mum, said: "We want to thank everyone who has made this trip possible and share with them the joy it has brought Elle."

Remember

"So far we have taken Elle to see the Lion King show which she really responded to and have done lots of sensory things, to try to get her to remember things. We are really looking forward to seeing how she responds to the therapies."

Miss Davidson, of Kingswinford, a former Wolverhampton Girls High student, was a happy and healthy 16-year-old when she collapsed in January 2013.

Over the next weeks she underwent several major brain operations and was given no chance of survival and fought for her life coming close to losing it six times. She spent five weeks in critical care, seven months in high dependency and 16 months in rehab.

Mrs Davidson added: "We are extremely grateful to Paul and his team at Blakelands for hosting the charity



Elle Mae gets to know the dolphin which it is hoped will aid her recovery



Nearer still as Elle Mae gets really close to the dolphin

afternoon tea. We raised £750 from selling tickets and it was lovely for Elle to spend an afternoon out with her friends, in such a beautiful setting."

Wolverhampton-based children's charity, Promise Dreams, also kindly donated £2,000 towards Elle's trip.

Family and friends, affectionately known as 'Elle's Angels', have also been fundraising, in order to help

Elle's parents give her as many opportunities as possible to get better.

The family will also be holding another fundraising event on September 4. The 'Angels and Dreams Ball' will be held at the Park Hall Hotel in Wolverhampton. Tickets cost £45 and include a three-course meal; live music and bacon sandwiches at midnight. To book tickets call 07967 123430.

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Kari's not-so-little pony show stirrups nostalgia

MANY young girls spent hours playing with My Little Pony figurines while growing up in the 1980s and 90s.

Now one avid Black Country collector is putting her beloved collection on display.

Kari Moodie, from Kingswinford, has been collecting the pastel coloured ponies since 1982 and now has around 2,500. She has put all her ponies on display at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery in the largest exhibition of its kind to be staged in the UK.

The exhibition, running throughout the summer, will see Miss Moodie's rarities – thought to be worth thousands of pounds – on display after being brought out of storage.

The 39-year-old, a keeper of glass and fine art at Kingswinford's Broadfield House Glass Museum, spoke of the happiness her collection has bought her and how it all stemmed from seeing a magazine advert at the age of six.

Santa

She said: "I was a collector right from the start. I remember seeing an advert in a magazine coming up to Christmas and asking Santa for them."

"That was it – every Christmas, every birthday, they were the main present. I always loved ponies as a little girl but never got (a real) one so I think I was making up for it."

Miss Moodie's collection ranges from the smallest, at less than an inch tall, to the largest at 3ft tall, as well as books, bags, bed linen and other merchandise. It includes ponies of every generation from the original 'My Pretty Pony' to the 'Equestria Girls' dolls of today.

Collectors and fans will be particularly interested in the rare mail order ponies, prototypes and collectors' editions she has acquired.



Massed ranks of My Little Pony figures as Kari Moodie's collection goes on display



Kari Moodie with a couple of her favourites from her My Little Ponies exhibition

Miss Moodie continued: "The special ones I have are the ones from around the world. I've got ones from Argentina, Holland and Brazil, to name but a few."

"I guess you would say the rarest is the pony in the egg – which was specially released for Easter in Greece. It was selling for £1,000 at one point but I didn't pay that much for it."

"I keep a spreadsheet with the ones I have got and the ones that I still need. My favourite will always be my first green little pony – it was the one that started it all off."

The exhibition will run until October 31 at Dudley Museum & Art Gallery, in St James' Road. Admission is free. The museum is closed Sundays and Bank Holidays.

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Village school pupils were in the running for medals

A MARATHON record holder presented Kinver school runners with medals after they completed a fitness challenge.

Amy Hughes, who ran 53 marathons in 53 days last year, presented pupils with medals after they collectively ran the distance of a marathon.

Pupils from Brindley Heath Junior and Kinver High School took part in the challenge, set up by the Kinver Fitness Collective, with the ambition of becoming one of the fittest villages in South Staffordshire.

Mrs Hughes, 26, who completed her 53 marathons in aid of a friend's daughter who was diagnosed with a brain tumour, said: "It is really amazing what the kids have achieved here in Kinver. They have all been so great. It embodies all I wanted to achieve."

Sport and music boost law firm's charity total

STAFF at law firm Higgs & Sons were pitch perfect in their support for charity as two very different events helped raise almost £6,000 for a good cause.

More than 350 professionals from businesses took part in the firm's annual charity football tournament at Stourbridge Rugby Club on June 25.

That evening, the Higgs & Sons choir took part in a national singing competition at Southwark Cathedral in London.

The six-a-side football tournament featured 40 teams from across the region and raised more than £3,800 for the Brierley Hill-based firm's designated charity, The Alzheimer's Society.

"We were thrilled that so many teams from local businesses and professional organisations got involved once again this year," said partner, Richard Griffiths. "With the appearance of three former Wolves players, this year's competition was even bigger and better than ever."

Former Wolves players Mel Eves, Dale Rudge and Jody Craddock turned out for Wolverhampton recruitment company, First4Staff in support of Breakthrough Breast Cancer.

Title

The afternoon of competitive but friendly football saw the team from Dains Accountants take the overall title, with Bulleys Chartered Surveyors winning the plate.

Later that day 18 Higgs' staff travelled to London to take part in the Legal Harmony national singing competition which saw the Higgs & Sons choir crowned winners and more than £2,000 raised for the Alzheimer's Society.

"Higgs & Sons' football tournament is a fantastic community event and a real highlight in the region's calendar, and now to have our



All Star — Jody Craddock

choir recognised in this way really does reflect the talent and commitment of the entire Higgs' staff team," said partner Tim Jones, co-ordinator of the firm's highly successful Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

Ray Nash, senior regional corporate fundraising executive at the Alzheimer's Society, said: "It's fantastic that Higgs & Sons are supporting Alzheimer's Society as their charity of the year. Through our network of local services, we touch the lives of over 30,000 people every week, providing practical services and support for people with dementia and their carers. These two events were fantastic and a big thank you goes out to all those involved."

Former Wolves' players Mel, Dale and Jody will also be part of the Wolves All Stars team taking part in the firm's next big fundraising event. The Higgs & Sons Family Fun Day on September 20 will see a Higgs Select XI take on the Wolves All Stars at Stourbridge FC.

Fire risk from hoarding

CREATIVE Support has teamed up with the West Midlands Fire Service to run an event warning about the dangers of hoarding in the home.

There will be a demonstration of how quickly a fire can spread due to clutter, as part of the event at Brierley Hill Fire Station in Dudley Road, tomorrow (Friday) from noon to 2pm.



Mega-marathon woman Amy Hughes, centre, with pupils and Kinver Fitness Collective supporters

One in six police officers want to quit

ONE in six police officers is planning to leave the service in the next two years, a survey indicates.

Almost 16 per cent of respondents in the poll of more than 30,000 officers admitted they intend to depart their roles. Seven per cent questioned plan to leave the service within the next two years, while 8.6 per cent are already looking for a new career.

The proportion was a slight increase on the same poll last year, when 14.6 per cent said they intend to leave.

The Police Federation of England and Wales, which conducted the research, seized on its findings as evidence of the poor state of morale across the police force.

Other findings from the poll include just under one in two intend to stay in the force until pension age; more than 95 per cent of those who are planning to leave cited "how the police as a whole are treated" as having an effect on their decision, while a similar proportion said their morale was a factor.

Overall 70.2 per cent of officers said morale was low, compared to 59.1 per cent in 2014, although nearly six in 10 said they feel proud to be in the police.



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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, July 23, 2015

14 Road closed by crash gas leak

A CAR that crashed into the front of a house caused a gas leak that saw an entire road closed off over safety concerns.

Firefighters closed off New Street in Quarry Bank on July 11 after a domestic gas pipe was broken in the crash.

Police have launched an investigation after the driver fled the scene in the vehicle.

Fractured

Brierley Hill crew commander David Owen of West Midlands Fire Service said: "The pipe had become dislodged and fractured."

"We put a cordon around to stop anyone walking past with a cigarette or anything that would ignite. Fortunately the gas was dispersing quite well and we remained on scene until the gas engineers arrived to stop the leak and fix the pipe."

The figures were revealed following an investigation by The Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau (NCB).

Funding for children across West Midlands is cut by £350m

GOVERNMENT funding to support youngsters in the West Midlands has been cut by more than £350 million in the last five years.

Services including child welfare, social care and children's services have been reduced by 56 per cent since 2010 with authorities across the Black Country among the hardest hit, according to research.

The figures were revealed following an investigation by The Children's Society and the National Children's Bureau (NCB).

The four Black Country authorities all saw a 58 per cent reduction in funding over the period.

In Wolverhampton the figure dropped from £19.5m to £8.2m, while Walsall saw an overall funding cut of £12.7m. Dudley's funding dropped by £10.6m and in Sandwell it fell from £26.6m to £11.2m, a drop of £15.4m. In Staffordshire funding was down from £38.7m to £18.7m.

In the West Midlands funding for early help fell by £356m. This early intervention funding is used by councils to run children's centres and other services on teen pregnancy, drugs and alcohol misuse.

The report says that despite the efforts of many councils to cushion the blow by securing resources from elsewhere, spending on children's centres and young people's and family support services has still fallen by almost a quarter over five years, from £3bn in 2010-11 to £2.3bn in 2014-15.

Anna Feuchtwang, chief executive of NCB, said: "It is positive that councils have done their best to protect services but there is no getting away from the fact that they have also had to make significant cuts which will impact on the lives of vulnerable children."

Jobs bounce in on trampolines

AN indoor trampoline park will open in Stourbridge, creating 15 jobs, after plans were approved.

Proposals for the complex, earmarked for a unit on the Stourbridge Estate on Mill Race Lane have been given the go-ahead by Dudley Council.

There will be connected trampolines, covering an area measuring 5,381 sq ft, as well as a foam pit area. There will also be a training trampoline complete with harness and a basketball slam dunk zone for young ones too.

The plans also include a viewing area and cafe bar.

The centre would be open seven days a week under the proposals lodged by L & C Commercial Ltd.

Arun glides to gold success



Former Stourbridge student Arun Kundi has achieved the Gold Duke of Edinburgh award

A YOUNG cadet and keen glider from a Stourbridge school has achieved the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Arun Kundi, aged 18, from Penn, travelled to London to receive his certificate from the Earl of Wessex.

He said: "DofE had quite an impact on my life at secondary school, it allowed me to develop all my skills at a young age. The experience has allowed me to volunteer in coaching younger cadets and is continuing to inspire me with my gliding."

Arun attended Oldswinford Hospital School, where he also completed both his Bronze and Silver DofE Awards.

He worked through the five sections of his DofE during Year 12 to achieve the gold award. Activities he participated in included coaching younger cadets at Old Swinford Hospital's Combined Cadet Force, where

he was able to improve leadership skills and gain the rank of cadet warrant officer.

For the gold residential section, he attended a gliding course held over 10 days at RNAS Predannack, in Cornwall, where he was given the opportunity to learn how to fly a glider and was then able to glide solo, achieving his Silver Wings.

It was said that throughout his DofE, Arun was able to prove himself as a great team member and a clear leader. This was further shown as Arun went on to become a school prefect in Year 13.

His award helped him to get into Royal Holloway, University of London, to study Mathematics and Computer Science. Arun added: "I'm very proud to have achieved this award, I even got to meet Professor Simon Cox which was a very pleasant surprise as he presented me with my award."

2016 start date for work on quarry site

Antiques fair at NEC

DEVELOPERS behind a plan to transform a disused quarry into a residential area hope to begin work on the site next year.

FCC Environment is targeting early 2016 to start the major scheme, which would see the Edwin Richards Quarry at Rowley Regis filled in and 281 homes built on its southern edge.

The firm has been given permission by Sandwell Council to go ahead with the project but has said issues with underground gas need to be investigated before any work can begin.

FCC has also confirmed that household waste will not be used to fill in the quarry as had been planned. Soil and non-hazardous materials will instead go into the ground.

The whole scheme could take up to 30 years to complete but it is hoped the homes could be completed during the next decade.

A FOUR-DAY summer antiques fair is being held at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre from today (Thursday).

Antiques for Everyone will run in halls 18 and 19 until Sunday, July 26.

Celebrating its 30th year, Antiques for Everyone is the UK's largest antiques, interiors and collectables fair, held three times a year at the NEC. Around 200 specialist dealers take part.

For more information on the event visit www.antiquesforeveryone.co.uk



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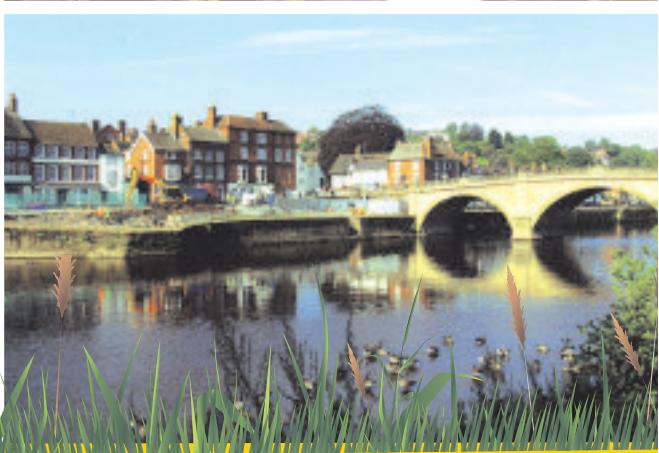
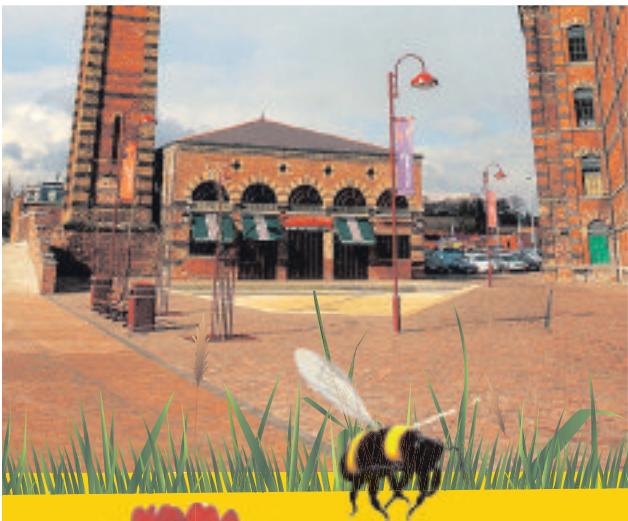
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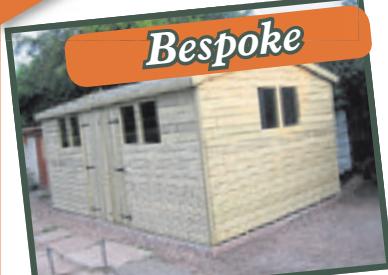
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places to visit

Exploring the castle grounds

Worcestershire's Hartlebury Castle is a perfect family day out this summer.

From theatre shows to exploring the castle grounds there is something to suit everyone.

From this Sunday until August 2, families can take the trail around the castle, discovering the secrets of the

past, the buildings and battlements that once stood on the ground.

As part of the National Festival of Archaeology, the castle has joined forces with the Country Museum to develop an exciting trail allowing visitors to explore the castle grounds through evidence and documented history of the castle.

The castle is also holding outdoor theatre events. On July 30, families are invited to take along a picnic and join the castle for an afternoon of laughter as Heartbreak Productions brings its version of David Walliams' children's book Mr Stink, live to the stage.

Visit hartleburycastletrust.org

It's a classic day for all

JOURNEY through the pretty scenery of the Midlands with Severn Valley Railway.

This full-sized standard-gauge railway line takes ticket holders on a stunning 16-mile journey between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth.

Mainly steam-hauled, it operates daily throughout the summer, during all local school holidays and most weekends of the year.

This summer is packed full of events and makes for a fantastic family day out. From Ladies Day's to Classic Vehicle Day's, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Evening Scenic Specials is just one of the many events that the railway is holding this summer.

Departing from the Kidderminster station, ticket holders will climb aboard one of the railway's stunning steam-hauled trains to depart on a leisurely 70-minute journey to Bridgnorth and back.

As well as enjoying the breathtaking countryside views, at an additional price ticket holders can also indulge in a fish and chip supper.

This can be washed down with a glass or two of one of the railway's cask ales, available in The Railwayman's Arms, on the Bridgnorth platform.



Severn Valley Railway is popular with visitors of all ages

For ticket holders who fancy a closer insight into what goes on throughout the year to keep the railway running smoothly, a behind the scenes tour is the perfect opportunity.

This Peep Behind the Scenes Tour allows ticket holders to see the skilled restoration and maintenance work carried out by the railway's dedicated volunteers.

Ticket holders also get a sneak peek at the railway's latest project. Tucked away in the corner of the Bewdley yard is the restoration site for GW Large Prairie Tank No. 4150.

This ex-Stourbridge and Severn Tun-

nel Junction engine is the only loco on the railway which has yet to be steamed in preservation, a determined effort is under way to get it back up and running.

The rRailway is also celebrating its 50th Birthday this year and heading back to the swinging '60s at its Kidderminster station.

The Sound of the '60s weekend is running from Friday, August 14, until Saturday, August 15, packed with fashion stalls, vintage vehicles and memorabilia. For further information including event dates, timetables and ticket prices visit www.svr.co.uk

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Creatures great and small amaze visitors

WEST Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley, helps its visitors discover their wild side.

Visitors to the park this summer can embark on their very own safari adventure, getting up close and personal with some of the world's fastest, tallest and cutest animals.

The park's four-mile drive-through safari allows ticket holders to experience some real close encounters.

Journey through the African Plains, home of the White Rhino's and giraffes.

Not to mention it is also the home of zebras, waterbucks, Congo buffaloes, ostriches and the elands – largest of all antelope species.

Next up, cross the border into Wild Asia. Contrasting from the enormous Asian water buffalo to the great sambar deer.

Ticket holders can also see the endangered barasingha and of course the one-horned rhino.

The carnivores section is one of the most popular on the safari tour.

Home to some of the world's most powerful hunters, it is an experience like no other as visitors come face to face with tigers, cheetahs, African wild dogs and the African lion.

Of course a safari tour would not be complete without elephants!

Elephant Valley is home to the park's little treasure, Sutton. He can be seen most days charging around the valley with his mother Five and Auntie Latabe.

Ticket holders can then head to the Discovery Trail and African Village to encounter more animals and reptiles.

Discovery Trail is home to the park's penguins, sea lions, reptiles and creepy crawlies.

Not forgetting one of the park's newest attractions Lorikeet Landing, allowing visitors to walk amongst the UK's largest flock of lorikeets.

The African Village is home to some of the park's cutest animals.

Its walk-through area allows visitors to feed the park's friendly Somali sheep, pygmy goats and Cameroon sheep. It is also home to the park's meerkats and the lemurs.

Land of the Living Dinosaurs is the park's newest attraction, allowing ticket holders to come face to face with the Cretaceous, Jurassic, Triassic and Permian species.

At an extra cost to general admission visitors can also experience the thrills of the park's theme park.

For further information and ticket prices visit www.wmsp.co.uk



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Unwind via a winding path

Bodenham Arboretum is a stunning day out for all the family. With more than 3,000 species of trees and shrubs, landscaped over 156 acres of Worcestershire countryside, it is a family day out with a difference.

The award-winning arboretum has five miles of winding paths that lead visitors through gorgeous dells, around lakes and pools. Not to mention it is also joined to a working farm that is a great experience for visitors young and old.

Visitors can see a variety of animals including Herefordshire cows, free-range poultry and young pigs.

After taking a wander around the gardens visitors can make their way to the visitor centre where there is a gift shop.

Visitors who fancy a bite to eat can bring along a picnic or head to the arboretum's restaurant.

Summer is one of the most beautiful times of the year to visit Bodenham Arboretum. Escape the madness of busy roads, journey across wooden bridges, take in the picturesque views and spot the wildlife that inhabits the surroundings. Parents can sit back and relax while their children explore a number of the big pools, such as Giants' Island.

Seats in the arboretum also provide extensive views to the Clent Hills and breathtaking countryside.

Medieval fun

Journey back to the medieval and Elizabethan times at Kidderminster's Harvington Hall.

Throughout the summer visitors to the manor-house can experience life as it was in the Medieval and Elizabethan periods. The stunning moated manor-house still has many of its Elizabethan wall-paintings and the hall contains some of the finest series of priest holes in the country.

Visitors to the hall can learn about its history through guided tours and interact with the volunteers who bring the house back to life.

Events taking place include an afternoon of Elizabethan dancing in the gardens and a multi-period living history event.

The living history event is the perfect opportunity for visitors to the home to get a real taste of the medieval lifestyle.

Visitors can find out all about preparing for medieval conflict right up to the 20th century, as well as watching a number of displays including archery, cooking and making music.

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places to visit

Holiday fun at County Museum this August

WORCESTERSHIRE County Museum at Hartlebury Castle is rolling out an inexpensive calendar of fun for the whole family this summer holiday – ideal for those looking to entertain their kids and pre-serve their pennies.

Three different children's craft activities will take place every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in August, from 10.30am-4pm.

Just a few examples of the craft activities on offer include:

Week 1 – (from August 4)

Dinosaurs and Monsters week including stegosaurus masks, snake mobiles, stick puppets and clay modelling

Week 2 – (from August 11)

Animals week including animal headbands, sealife snappers, origami and brass rubbings

Week 3 – (from August 18)

History week including Egyptian amulets, Aztec masks, Viking runes and Roman arenas

Week 4 – (from August 25)

Pirate week including skull and crossbones flags, treasure maps, pirate hats and buccaneer bookmarks

Activity weeks are great value costing just £2 per child for a whole day's worth of activities after the normal admission fee (which is just £13 for a family ticket).

On each Tuesday & Wednesday of August there will also be a chance to join in the have-a-go archery in the Castle's Carriage Circle (small addi-



Max and Lois Webster from Pedmore making clay models

tional cost). And of course there is over 1,000 years of history to explore within the museum and a fun family trail to lead you round.

You may be wondering why the last week explores the theme of pirates – well that's because we are rounding off the summer with a special pirate-themed day on the Bank Holiday (Monday, August 31).

'Pirate School' will be a great day out where families can go and meet

Captain Sharkbreath and his crew and learn how to be a pirate on the good ship Hartlebury.

Lessons include reading treasure maps, making pirate flags, jobs aboard ship, singing sea-shanties, cannon drill and how to talk 'pirate'!

For more information call 01299 250416

A full timetable detailing each day's activities is available at the website www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk

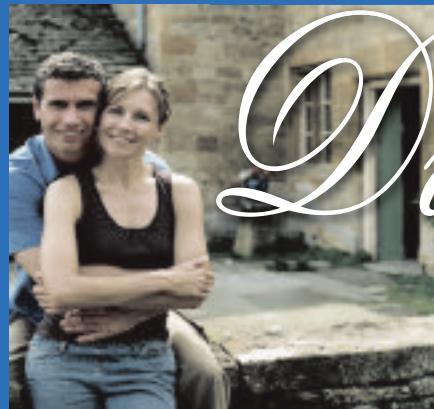
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places to visit

Clearly creative look at heritage of glass industry

THE Red House Glass Cone is at the heart of the Stourbridge's glass making heritage and has varied events on throughout the summer.

On High Street, Wordsley, The Red House Glass Cone was built at the end of the 18th century and was used for the manufacture of glass until 1936.

Reaching 100 feet, glass cones were once commonplace in the Stourbridge area. Today, it is the only complete glass cone in the area and one of only four left in the UK.

With the aid of film, audio guides, exhibits and live demonstrations, visitors can now explore the cone's 200 years of glass making history.

Glass blowing demonstrations take place every day during the summer holidays, between 12 noon and 3pm.

This weekend, July 25 and 26, the cone hosts a 1940s weekend with costumed re-enactors, military vehicles, war years sing-a-long, glass making demonstrations and open studios. The events will take place from 10am to 4pm and admission is free.

Sarah Jones, a lampwork glass artist, specialises in bespoke handmade glass beads. All of Sarah's beads are hand crafted in her studio at the Red House Glass Cone, where you can watch her working. The studio is open Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

Jane Ellis is a fused glass artist working from Studio 7. She has been working with glass for eight years. First starting with stained glass, she then moving to fusing or kiln formed glass.



The Red House Glass Cone and visitor centre in Wordsley, Stourbridge

Jane's work can be seen in her studio.

Admission is also free at Broadfield House Glass Museum nearby in Compton Drive, Kingswinford, with an impressive collection of glass artefacts. It is open from noon to 4pm Tuesday to Sunday, with its Hot Glass Studio open from Wednesday to Sunday, noon to 4pm.

Today (Thursday) the glass museum is hosting a teddy bears picnic as part of an under-fives day. It will run from noon until 4pm and families can bring

along their favourite picnic treats and blankets to enjoy lunch in the grounds of the glass museum.

Youngsters can take part in storytelling sessions and craft activities as well as watching glass making demonstration.

Laser Quest, at The Warehouse, High Street, Stourbridge, will be bringing back their KAOS Kids Club for the summer holidays. It is £9 per online booking, see lasergames.co.uk/kaos/ for details.



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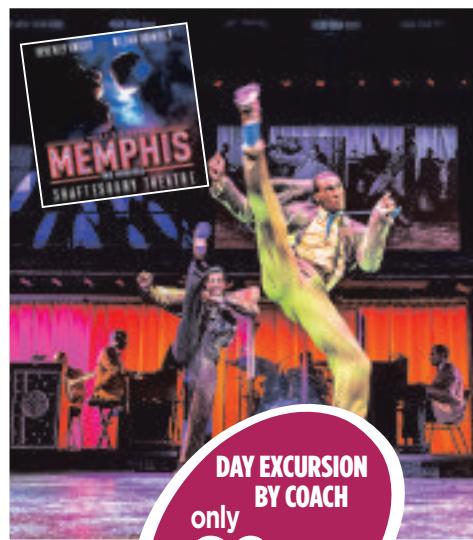
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places to visit

Big Beano Takeover at the Merry Hill centre

THE Big Beano Takeover event is landing at the intu Merry Hill Shopping Centre.

A range of events will be taking place to keep your little minxes and menaces happy all summer long until August 27. Children can play, create and be mischievous all for free in Dennis the Menace's backyard on the Lower Mall near River Island.

On Minecraft Mondays (July 27, August 3 and 10) from 11am to 4pm at the Lower mall near River Island young visitors can go Minecraft mad with free Big Beano Battle Days.

Bring the little Minecraft menaces along to design their best Beano builds and put their mining skills to the test as they battle it out in the live Minecraft stations.

Big Beano Minecraft Mondays are free and available on a first come first service basis, with prizes on offer for the best designs and the summer's best build.

Youngsters can visit The Big Beano Drive-in Movie on Tuesday, July 28, on Wednesday, August 5, and Wednesday, August 12 from 11am to 4pm.

They can take a seat in one of the giant, customisable cardboard cars and get ready to watch the Dennis the Menace movie on big screen TV.

There will also be a free Beacon mobile for kids to make and take home.

There will be Gnasher mask making on Wednesday, July 29, with the chance to have your picture taken in the kennel photobooth.

Beano-tastic face painting and tat-



Lots of Beano comic inspired events will be held at intu Merry Hill

too time will be held on Tuesday, August 4, and Gnasher's Crazy Kennel Design Class on August 11.

One of the highlights will be Dennis the Menace Day on August 13 when Dennis himself will be dropping by to help intu Merry Hill throw a big Beano bash!

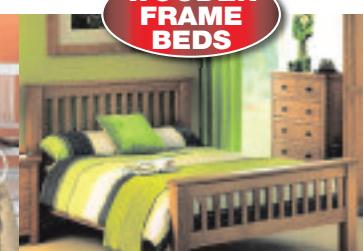
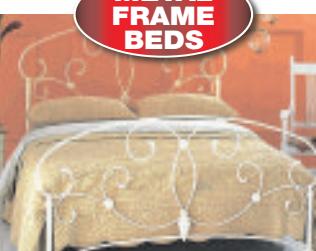
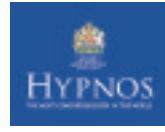
Get stuck in from 10am with the free Beano craft-ernoon carrying on until 4pm with live music jamming sessions and mini music lessons from The Music Store plus the chance to win Den-

nis the Menace musical equipment throughout the day.

Meanwhile, during Big Balloon Thursdays the Quest team will be out and about at intu Merry Hill making free crazy balloons for kids. Go along and visit their fun station on the Upper Mall near Eat Central from 11am to 4pm.

See the website intu.co.uk/merry-hill/events/the-big-beano-takeover for more information about the Big Beano Takeover.

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Fun-packed line-up of activities at country park

SHROPSHIRE Council rangers are gearing up for a busy, fun-filled summer holiday in the Severn Valley.

This year the Severn Valley Country Park at Alveley has a number of exciting activities for the children to enjoy over the summer holidays.

Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be returning to the Severn Valley on Friday, August 14, as part of their national tour with William Shakespeare's The Tempest.

Rangers are inviting visitors to bring a picnic and low-backed chairs to add to their enjoyment.

These sessions will rotate between pond-dipping and mini-beast hunting.

They are a great way to learn about the different habitats within the park and the many creatures that live in them.

Each day of the holidays, a self-led trail will be available from the visitor centre between 11am-4pm.

Families can follow the clues around the park to help find favourite storybook characters.

There will also be some fabulous outdoor entertainment during August.

Local company, Salvage Cinema will be bringing Hollywood to the park when they screen two classic films.

Mamma Mia! The Movie will be shown on Friday, August 7 and Back to the Future on Saturday, August 8.

Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be returning to the Severn Valley on Friday, August 14, as part of their national tour with William Shakespeare's The Tempest.

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Families can follow the clues around the park to help find favourite storybook characters.



Children can learn about tiny creatures as part of Severn Valley Country Park's programme of activities

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Displays and stunts at show

One of the country's best-known agricultural shows promises fun for all the family.

The Burwarton Show, which takes place at Cleobury North, near Bridgnorth, on Thursday, August 6, will be packed with events and activities inside and outside of the main ring.

Highlights of the show include a sheepdog display with Bob Hogg and a stunt-filled display by the Royal Signals Motorcycle Display Team.

Visitors are sure to flock to the ever-popular sheep-shearing competition which includes Junior, Intermediate, Senior and Veterans classes.

Children's entertainment will feature throughout the day and will include performances by magician Magic Russ and Jack the Jester.

There will also be a chance to see vintage tractors, engines and farmyard machinery, as well as livestock in a range of classes.

Advance tickets for this year's show are still available from sales outlets across Shropshire and Staffordshire and also by phone on 01746 787535. For more information visit www.burwartonshow.co.uk

Tasty treats for food fans

About 80 exhibitors from all over the West Midlands will be tempting visitors with fresh, local produce at this weekend's Cosford Food Festival.

The annual event returns for a two days on Saturday and Sunday at the RAF Museum.

As well as food stalls, there will be live cookery demonstrations and talks given by local chefs and food producers. There will also be live music from Anthony Doyle and Rebecca Grace with JCjazz.

Meanwhile, children can pick up cookery skills thanks to a series of workshops called Kidz Kitchens. Admission prices on the gate are £5 for adults, £4 for seniors and £2 for children aged 5-15. Family tickets (two adults with up to four children) cost £12.00.

For more information go to www.rafmuseum.org.uk

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places to visit

Event explores life for Victorian youngsters

DISCOVER more about how Victorian children spent their leisure time at the new Victorian childhood family event at Blits Hill Victorian Town, near Ironbridge, between Tuesday, August 18, and Sunday, August 23.

Some of the shops and houses will be transformed to emulate favourite children's stories from the 19th century.

Follow the trail to meet Gepetto at the sawmill, the shoemaker who created Pinocchio in the 1863 novel, and the wicked witch who tricked Hansel and Gretel, as well as characters from other childhood classics.

Must-see

Lots of activities will also be taking place on the Green. There will be traditional children's games each day such as musical chairs, sack races, hoops and skipping.

The Prince Albert Players will also be performing the classic tale of Little Red Riding Hood – a definite must-see for all the family.

For the first time at Blits Hill, visitors can meet the popular creator of the much-loved Katie series of stories, James Mayhew.

James, a writer and illustrator, will be on site as a traditional 'plein air' Victorian artist and will be creating artworks inspired by the streets and buildings of the town.

Blits Hill Victorian Town is one of the 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums, which collectively won a gold award in



Visitors will see how Victorian children spent their leisure time

the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category at the prestigious VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2015.

Unlimited

The museum is open 10am to 5pm. A great value annual passport ticket allowing unlimited entry into all 10 Ironbridge Gorge Museums costs £27.95 per adult, £21.50 for seniors, £16.95 for children under 18, £68 for a family of two adults and all their children and £50 for a family with one adult;

under-fives free (terms and conditions apply).

Passports can also be bought online in advance, saving 10 per cent, and individual entry tickets are available at each museum.

Activities and workshops at the attraction vary each day and some carry an extra charge.

For further information, contact the Ironbridge Tourist Information Centre on 01952 433 424 or visit www.ironbridge.org.uk

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Zulu beats meet ballet

Inala preview – Page 25



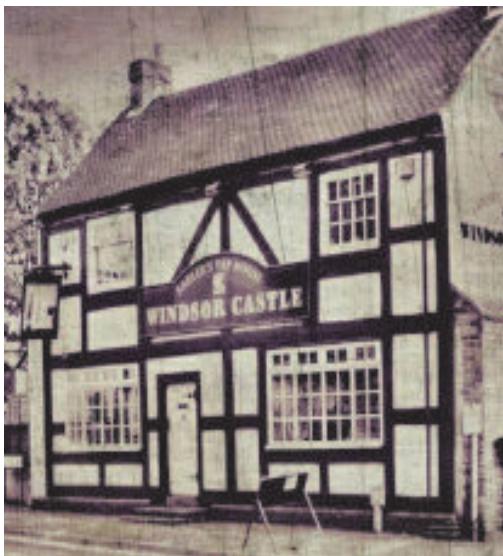
Blues queen

Joanne Shaw Taylor –
Page 25



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Badly Drawn Boy



Saturday, 7pm

Town Hall, B'ham

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of The Hour of Bewilderbeast album Damon Gough will be performing the Mercury Prize winning album in its entirety.

Visit www.thsh.co.uk

Alun Cochrane & Hal Cruttenden



Thursday, 6.45pm

Glee Club, Birmingham

Join two of the biggest names on the comedy circuit, Alun Cochrane (above) and Hal Cruttenden as they warm up for their Edinburgh Fringe Festival stints.

Visit www.glee.co.uk

Boycott & Aggers



Monday, 7.30pm

Symphony Hall, B'ham

Geoffrey Boycott and Jonathan Agnew return to Symphony Hall with their Second Innings tour, ready to amaze and enthral with their stories, passion and quick-fire wit.

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Sun at 11am - 1pm, Newhampton Arts Centre,

Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. Call 01902 572090

New fusion of Zulu music and dance



A scene from Inala, featuring top dancers and choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, which is coming to Birmingham

FOLLOWING a 2014 tour and sell-out runs at both the Edinburgh International Festival and London's Sadler's Wells, Inala brings together four-time Grammy Award-winning South African choral legends, Ladysmith Black Mambazo with dancers choreographed by the multi-award winning Mark Baldwin.

This unique artistic collaboration sees the Zulu culture-inspired production reworked for 2015 and it comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Wednesday as part of a UK tour.

Inala means 'abundance of goodwill' in Zulu and delivers an uplifting live experience, powered by music, song and dance. It features current and former dancers from The Royal Ballet and Rambert with an original score performed by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, created by the group's founder Joseph Shabalala and British composer Ella Spira.

They created the concept for Inala

with the Royal Ballet's Pietra Melo-Pittman, who said: "Inala is influenced by Zulu dancing and South African stories and cultures, creating a new language of dance that respects the traditions of 'pure' classical dance training of all our dancers."

Male choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo found worldwide fame when they sang on Paul Simon's Graceland album in 1986.

For tickets see attickets.com/birmingham or call 0844 871 3011.

Home grown guitar hero

BLACK Country blues rock singer and guitarist Joanne Shaw Taylor will play her only club show of the summer in Bilston.

The songwriter, who released her latest album, The Dirty Truth, last September, will perform live for fans at the Robin 2 in Bilston on Saturday.

Joanne grew up in the Black Country, leaving school at 16 and running straight into her big break when her demo landed in the hands of Eurythmics icon Dave Stewart after a charity gig.

Her debut album White Sugar followed in 2008 and since then she has released another four albums to critical acclaim from rock and blues pundits across the world. She has also moved to live in the United States, where her fiery fretwork is much in demand.

Blues fan and Robin 2 owner Mike Hamblett said: "Joanne played her first ever performance at The Robin in Brierley Hill back in 2000, as a young teenager."

"She has gone on to become a world class artist, performing around the world."

He continued: "It gives me great pleasure and is a great honour to see Joanne come back to her roots performing once again at the Robin 2, with special guests Virgil & The Accelerators, another great emerging blues rock talent destined for much bigger things."

Tickets cost £17.50 in advance or £19.50 on the night, available from therobin.co.uk or by calling the box office on 01902 401211.

A world class artist performing around the world

Comedy, cricket and Carpenters

ONE-NIGHTERS over the forthcoming weekend and week include veteran vocal group The Drifters at the Wulfrun Hall tomorrow night (Friday) and Glaswegian comic Kevin Bridges at the Civic Hall in Wolverhampton on Saturday.

Also on Saturday is Voice of the Heart, a two-hour tribute to the music of The Carpenters featuring singer Carole Gordon, the Blue Jeans Band and singers at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Betheted singer-songwriter Badly Drawn Boy is at Birmingham's Town Hall on Saturday, and Geoffrey Boycott and Jonathan Agnew share cricket anecdotes at the Symphony Hall on Monday.

Folk gig is delayed by bizarre accident

A CONCERT by folk veterans The Strawbs has been put back to the new year after singer Dave Cousins choked on a cup of tea and passed out.

The band was due to perform at the Robin 2 in Bilston on July 24. But Dave was taken to hospital on June 16 after choking on a cup of tea. This caused him to lose consciousness, hitting his head. He was discharged on June 19 but the accident dislodged a kidney stone and on June 24 he was operated on.

The band's leader for 50 years, he is recovering well but is not yet fit enough to tour. The show has been rescheduled for April 27.

Autumn of rock in West Midlands

AUTUMN is shaping up to be a memorable season for indie rock fans with some choice gigs.

US psych band Wand play The Rainbow in Digbeth on September 12. Rising stars Wolf Alice, one of the hits of Glastonbury, play The Institute on September 17. In October highlights include West Midlands homecomings for Peace at Wolverhampton Civic (Oct 10) and Swin Deep at The Institute (Oct 17). Singer-songwriter James Bay is at 02 Academy in Brum (Oct 8), London's next big thing Gengahr are at the Hare & Hounds in Kings Heath (Oct 12) and Liverpool's Circa Waves play The Institute (Oct 16).



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Here's what a typical week entails at the Samson and Lion of Stourbridge.



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Penguins nesting at Boulders Beach



Life's a beach - beach huts at Muizenberg



Tasty treat - food and wine pairing at Steenberg, South Africa



Sunset at Clifton Bay

Cape Town – so much to see, so little time, but so worthwhile

FORTY-EIGHT hours in Cape Town – so much to do, so little time. But as a tag-on to a safari or the Garden Route, it's worthwhile.

Food, wine, culture and cabs are ridiculously cheap thanks to the strong pound against the rand.

On my visit, I plan to take in the obvious highlights for first-time visitors.

I start with a visit to the jewel in the geological crown of this diverse metropolis, the majestic Table Mountain, a sandstone wonder of the world which looms large wherever you go in the city.

The string of peaks known as the 12 Apostles are a favourite with hikers, but I chose to join the queue for the Cableway cable car on a five-minute ride to the top (adult return 225 rand/around £12.50). A

By Hannah Stephenson

revolving floor within the car ensures all budding photographers have a 360 degree birds' eye view.

You could spend a good few hours up here balancing your yin and yang. Young visitors sunbathe on the rocks, others seek out the flora, fauna and wildlife – I see lizards, but there are also guinea-pig-like creatures called rock rabbits, or dassies, and nearly 1,500 species of fynbos, including proteas, ericas and reeds.

After Table Mountain, I head for the lush vineyards of Constantia, around 20 minutes away, to test my palate with a wine-tasting session at Bistro Sixteen82 at Steenberg Farm, which produces some of the country's finest wine.

To blow the cobwebs away after lunch, I head for Boulders Beach, home to colonies

of African penguins nesting on the beach and waddling about on the rocks. You pay 60 rand (£3.30) to get in, but have good vantage points from the boardwalk.

Further up the coastline of False Bay, I stop off for souvenirs at the quirky, bohemian seaside town of Kalk Bay.

Sophisticated

After a full day, I'm ready to try some of South Africa's finest fare. Cape Town offers a wealth of sophisticated dining based on local produce. I try springbok and ostrich while I'm here, as well as abundant seafood, from freshly caught tuna and angel fish, to oysters and scallops.

The next day, I venture to the spot I anticipate will be the highlight of my 48 hours – Robben Island. Catching the ferry from the Nelson Mandela Gateway at the fashionable V&A Waterfront, a symbol of Cape

Town's resurgence post-apartheid with its trendy restaurants, upmarket shopping malls, colonial-style buildings and working harbour, Robben Island and all it represents could be a million miles away.

It's actually a half-hour boat ride to the island, a Unesco World Heritage Site, which had been used as a prison since the 17th century and also served as a leper colony and as a lunatic asylum. We're taken on a bus around this desolate scrubland stopping at the limestone quarry where the prisoners spent their days breaking rocks in the scorching sun.

Back on the mainland, I experience the other extreme, namely fashionable Clifton, one of the wealthiest areas of Cape Town.

Here, we stay at Cape View, which calls itself a luxury guesthouse but that's a huge understatement. Checking my watch, I've done my 48 hours but I wish I had more . . .

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CHOICE



Len Goodman

Dancing Through the Blitz: Blackpool's Big Band Story (BBC2, 9.10pm)

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of VE day, Jools Holland, Lucy Worsley and Len Goodman celebrate the big band sound and explore the social history behind the music that saw Britain through the Second World War. They trace the evolution of big band music from its beginnings in 1920s America to its glory days in the three decades that followed. Jools demonstrates how the big band sound developed through the influence of legends such as Duke Ellington, while Len and Lucy explore the dancing that accompanied big bands during the war, like the energetic Jitterbug. Featuring contributions by Petula Clark, Roy Hudd and Juliet Gardiner.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 The Box. (R) 12.00 BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Live Formula 1: The Hungarian Grand Prix Qualifying. Suzi Perry introduces coverage from the Hungariaring part of the race. 2.20 Live Athletics: Anniversary Games. Coverage from the Olympic Stadium in London. 5.20 Celebrity Mastermind. With Ken Dodd, Ore Oduba, Lizzy Yarnold and Alex Riley. (R) 5.50 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong quizzes eight chart-topping singers - Paul Young and Carol Decker, Sheila Ferguson and Dana, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott and Keith Duffy and Mikey Graham. (R)
- 6.40 BBC News.
- 6.50 Regional Programme.
- 7.00 **Prized Apart**. The four remaining adventurers in Morocco compete on the side of Barrage el Mansour's dam, as the series reaches a dramatic finale. Last in the series.
- 8.05 **The National Lottery: Five Star Family Reunion**. The all-important winning numbers are revealed.
- 9.00 **Creativity**. Joseph starts his first day at Hobys' accident and emergency department, and he immediately has to put his powers of persuasion to use when a lie nearly costs a girl her life. Medical drama, starring Charles Venn.
- 9.50 **Mrs Brown's Boys**. Agnes looks after a robotic baby that has been given to Dermot and Maria to help them prepare for their new arrival, but uses unorthodox methods to stop the fast infant from crying. Meanwhile, Cathy develops a crush on her psychology lecturer. Comedy, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R)
- 10.20 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.
- 10.40 **Not Going Out**. The friends jet off on a summer holiday, only for Lucy and Daisy to endure the worst flight of their lives when Lee gets a bad case of the jitters on the plane. (R)
- 11.10 **Film: The Proposal**. (2009) A Canadian publishing editor trying to avoid deportation from America bribes her assistant into a marriage of convenience. Romantic comedy, with Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds.
- 12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.35** Formula 1: The Hungarian Grand Prix - Practice One. (R) **8.15** Formula 1: The Hungarian Grand Prix - Practice Two. (R) **9.55** Live Formula 1: The Hungarian Grand Prix - Practice Three. **10.15** Formula 1: First Wine. 12.10 **Gone Girl**: Talking Pictures. (R) **12.45** Film: Singin' in the Rain. (1952) Musical comedy, starring Gene Kelly. **2.30** Escape to the Continent. **3.30** Flog It! (R) **4.00** The House That £100K Built. (R) **5.00** The House That £100K Built. Journalist Kieran Long and architect Peter Taylor follow the progress of Shatto and his partner Marcus, whose dream build a dream home near Inverness has proved problematic. (R)
- 6.00 **Ocean Queens: The Story of Cunard**. As all three of Cunard's world famous liners make an historic visit to Liverpool, Simon O'Brien reflects on 175 years of pioneering transatlantic travel.
- 6.30 **Gardeners' World**. Monty Don travels to Cambridge for a tour of the garden at Clare College. He also catches up with various seasonal tasks at Longmeadow and harvests the first of his tomato crop. (R)
- 7.00 **Proms Extra 2015**. New series. Katie Derham chats to violinist Nicola Benedetti, who performs in the studio. Plus, reviews of the week's concerts and David Owen Norris presents Inside the Score.
- 7.40 **Edwardian Farm**. Alex Langlands and Peter Ginn set sail on a fishing trip, bringing a wind-powered vessel, casting a net and mastering fishing shanties. Meanwhile, Ruth Goodman has a seance. (R)
- 8.40 **Dad's Army**. The bumbling platoon boosts its fighting strength by acquiring an armoured car. Classic comedy, starring Clive Dunn and Arthur Lowe. (R)
- 9.10 **Dancing Through the Blitz: Blackpool's Big Band Story**. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of VE day, Jools Holland, Lucy Worsley and Len Goodman celebrate the big band sound that saw Britain through the Second World War.
- 10.40 **Film: Zodiac**. (2007) Fact-based crime thriller following the hunt for a serial killer who terrorised San Francisco in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Robert Downey Jr.
- 1.10 **Film: Repo Chick**. (2009) **2.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! 6.25 Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Benji Dano. (R) **7.00** Cannimals. (R) **7.15** Sooy. (R) **7.30** Super 4. (R) **7.45** Fire Horse. (R) **8.00** The Big Bang Theory. **8.25** TV Novel. **8.30** Invasion. **8.25** Murdoch. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** Surprise Surprise. (R) **2.35** The Chase. (R) **3.30** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **4.15** Tipping Point. (R) **5.15** Catchphrase. (R)
- 6.00 **Regional Programme**; Weather. **6.15** ITV News; Weather.
- 6.30 **You've Been Framed!** Comedy from the mind of Harry Hill, inspired by viewers' videos. A toy bear is interrogated for information, a little girl's prayers turn into a terrifying threat. Disney princesses conduct body searches and One Direction vandalise a family home. Plus, the Great Susan Boye Eyebrow Race and tips for keeping a marriage fresh. (R)
- 7.00 **Film: Despicable Me**. (2010) A criminal mastermind hopes to seal his reputation as the greatest villain of all by stealing the moon. First he needs to get his hands on a shrinking ray owned by a rival evil genius, and adopts three orphan girls to help him - but finds that fatherhood brings out his long-buried parenting side. Animated comedy, with the voices of Steve Carell, Jason Segel, Russell Brand and Julie Andrews.
- 9.00 **The Nation's Favourite 80s Number One**. The spotlight is turned to the 1980s - a defining decade in both pop and fashion. Featurettes with Spandau Ballet, Bonnie Tyler and Madness, plus a look at the stories behind chart classics such as Don't You Want Me, Tainted Love, Billie Jean and Come On Eileen. Zoo Ball narrates.
- 10.25 **ITV News**; Weather.
- 10.45 **Film: Twins**. (1988) Genetically designed twin brothers who were separated at birth set out on an adventure in search of their unknown mother. Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito.
- 12.40 **Jackpot 247**. Interactive gaming. **3.00** Ejector Seat. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service.

CHANNEL 4

- 6.05 **Ironman UK** Bolton. **6.35** FIM Superbike World Championship. **7.00** IPC World Swimming Championships 2015. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** Rude(ish) Tube. **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot and York. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.45** Come Dine with Me. (R)
- 6.15 **Come Dine with Me**. It is the final dinner party in Lancashire and the turn of sales manager Andy to host. He is confident in his locally sourced menu, but faces the challenge of impressing Nicky. (R)
- 6.40 **Channel 4 News**.
- 7.00 **Homes by the Sea**. Architectural designer Charlie Luxton visits the Isle of Skye in the Inner Hebrides to explore how some of the island's abandoned buildings are being brought back to life by an influx of newcomers. He explores a traditional Skye longhouse, which blends Scottish simplicity and Scandinavian chic, before viewing a white property and a contemporary farm house. Previously seen on More4.
- 8.00 **Walking Through History: Norman Conquest of Pembrokeshire**. Tony Robinson embarks on a four-day walk tracing the story of the Norman invasion of Wales, which he discovers was very different from the victory at Hastings. (R)
- 9.00 **Film: Pitch Perfect**. (2012) Premiere. Anna Kendrick studies herself a social outcast during her first year of college, but soon acquires a new circle of friends in a band of misfits with a shared talent for singing. She joins their a cappella group and leads them to compete in the campus music competitions. Comedy, starring Anna Kendrick and Rebel Wilson.
- 11.15 **Film: The Tourist**. (2010) A woman tries to trick the police into thinking a tourist is her criminal lover with his appearance surgically changed. Romantic thriller, with Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie.
- 1.15 **The Last Leg**. (R) **2.15** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.30** Secret Eaters. (R) **5.25** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. **5.30** Draw It! (R) **5.55** How I Met Your Mother. (R)

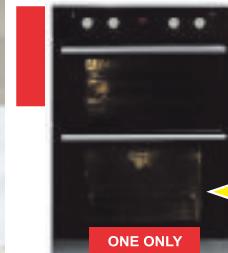
CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 **Milkshake!** **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. **10.40** Cowboy Builders. (R) **11.40** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.35** Crime: Dead Weight. (R) **1.57** Crime: Big Business. (R) **2.30** The Devil Rescues with Alan Davies. (R) **4.05** Weather: Terror: Brits in Peril. (R) **5.05** 5 News. The day's headlines. **5.10** Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild. A former financier who lives on a remote island in Laos. (R)
- 6.10 **Benefits: Kids and Counting the Cost**. Three women on benefits who are struggling to bring up their children, including a mother-of-seven who also cares for her husband as he has health problems. Last in the series. (R)
- 7.00 **Nightmare Tenants: Slum Landlords**. Landlord Nicholas Parrington discovers a couple are subletting his house, just months after a previous tenant had turned the property into a brothel, while investors in a community centre for children are aghast when squatters move into their building. In Lewisham, the council's Rogue Landlord Unit raids one of their main streets, on the lookout for slum conditions, illegal overcrowding and criminal activities. (R)
- 8.00 **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away**. High-court enforcement officers Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner face some tough decisions when they are given the task of repossessing a house in which a woman is living with two young children. They also pursue a debt of more than £25,000 and visit a tenant in a fashionable London borough who has not paid his rent. (R)
- 9.00 **Transporter: The Series**. In Berlin, ex-special forces agent Frank finds a simple chauffeur job ferrying rich young socialite Dela back to her father quickly turns into a protection task after learning German crime lord Frieder Trumpf is aiming to kidnap the young heiress. Action drama, starring Chris Vance. Previously seen on Spike.
- 10.00 **Live Championship Boxing**. Nick Blackwell vs Damon Jones. Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the bout for the British Middleweight title, held at Derby Arena.
- 12.00 **Super Casino**. **3.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

- BBC Three** **7.00** Top Gear **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.00** Film: Shrek (2001) **10.25** Live at the Apollo **11.00** Family Guy **1.30** People Just Do Nothing **2.00** Some Girls **3.30** People Just Do Nothing **4.00** Close
- BBC Four** **7.00** Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom **8.00** Pappano's Classical Voices: Baritones & Basses **9.00** Cordon **10.45** The Heart of Country: How Nashville Became Music City USA **12.15** Johnny Cash: The Man, His World, His Music **1.15** Top of the Pops: 1980 **1.50** Wild Burma: Nature's Lost Kingdom **2.50** Timewhip **3.50** Close
- ITV3** **11.25** Catchphrase Celebrity Special **12.25** Bothton Guiness World Records **12.55** Film: The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (2005) **3.15** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **4.45** Film: The Lake House (2008) **6.50** Film: Beach: The Future Part 2 (1989) **8.00** Film: Love Actually (2003) **11.45** Film: Troy (2004) **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen **10.00**
- ITV4** **11.10** Tour de France Highlights **12.00** Tour de France Live. Coverage of the 20th stage. **4.00** British Open **5.00** Cricket: County Highlights **5.00** Counting Cars **6.00** Storage Wars: Texas **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** Film: The Living Daylights (1987) **10.40** Film: The Long Kiss Goodnight (1996) **1.05** Tour de France Highlights **1.55** The Cycle Show **2.45** Movies Now **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **4.45**
- E4** **11.30** Meliss & Joey **12.30** Baby Daddy **1.30** How I Met Your Mother **2.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** Film: Journey to the Center of the Earth (2008) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Shadow Hal (2001) **11.15** Gogglebox **12.50** Bad Robots **2.00** Robot 2.25 **Virtually Famous** **3.10** How I Met Your Mother **5.00** Super Casino **3.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)
- FINANCE* OPTIONS AVAILABLE** **11.00** Silent Running (1972) **1.00** Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **3.05** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **4.45** The Grinch (2000) **6.55** Crocodile Dundee (1986) **9.00** Transporter 3 (2008) **11.05** Husk (2008) **12.50** The Insider (1999) **4.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

From Hell, Channel 5, 10.55pm

A detective tries to use his opium-triggered visions to put an end to Jack the Ripper's reign of terror over 19th-century London. But in the course of his investigation, he uncovers a sinister conspiracy that reaches the highest levels of Victorian society. Mystery thriller, based on Alan Moore's comic book series, starring Johnny Depp. (2001)

TUESDAY

Twelve Monkeys, BBC1, 11.45pm

A time traveller from 2035 journeys back to the 1990s to discover the cause of a deadly disease that ravaged the world, only to be thrown into an asylum. He meets a fellow patient who may hold the key to his mission, but the longer he spends in the past, the more he comes to question whether he really is from the future or simply delusional. Terry Gilliam's sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt. (1995)

WEDNESDAY

Dear Viola, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Premiere. A shy woman takes over a newspaper's advice column and soon begins to fall in love with a widower she starts corresponding with. Romantic comedy, starring Kellie Martin. (2014)



Al: Artificial Intelligence, Friday, BBC1, 11.15pm

THURSDAY

A Killer Among Us, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A homicide detective refuses to give up when the murder of a woman goes unsolved, and continues to discreetly investigate after the case is closed. He becomes convinced the victim's husband is the killer, and recruits their teenage daughter as an accomplice to gather evidence against her own father. Crime thriller, starring Tess Atkins and Tom Cavanagh. (2012)

FRIDAY

AI: Artificial Intelligence, BBC1, 11.15pm

A robot boy programmed to see his owner as a parent tries to become human, so the 'mother' who rejected him will love him. Steven Spielberg's sci-fi drama, starring Haley Joel Osment, Jude Law, William Hurt and Frances O'Connor. (2001)

Couple are drawn into a dangerous world

Think of Agatha Christie and what immediately springs to mind?

Probably fastidious Belgian detective Hercule Poirot and sharp-as-a-tack pensioner Miss Marple.

In fact, there are maybe even some people who have never read any of her work that believe Christie's output only features those two formidable characters.

But how wrong they are.

Christie wrote a variety of books and short stories that featured neither of them, as well as four novels and a collection of tales featuring the adventures of Tommy and Tuppence Beresford, a pair of married amateur detectives.

The Beresfords first popped up in 1922, and their adventures spanned the next 50 years – indeed their final story, Postern of Fate, was the last novel written by Christie.

This take on their tales takes place solely in the 1950s and stars David Walliams and Jessica Raine as the daring duo. It also mixes espionage, drama and humour against the backdrop of the Cold War.

The first run features two stories – The Secret Adversary and N or M? – and lasts six weeks. Christie's books are relatively short and tend to be adapted into feature-length dramas, so it's refreshing that here, viewers have something to really get their teeth into – as well as the potential for cliffhangers at the end of each episode.

In fact, the whole project appears to have been put together with tender loving care.

"David Walliams and Hilary Strong from the Agatha Christie Group came to discuss the fact that they wanted to reinvent Tommy and Tuppence," says executive producer Hilary Bevan Jones. "David was particularly tickled by the idea of a married amateur detective duo and the image of them bickering over a dead body."

"Christie has a wonderful sense of humour and I'm not sure how many people of this generation know that. We decided to think of it as Indiana Jones meets Agatha Christie."

Eyebrows may be raised at the sight of Walliams playing Tommy, but Zinnie Harris, who adapted their

first case, The Secret Adversary, for the small screen, reckons he's perfect.

"David is a wonderful Tommy as I always thought he would be," she reveals. "He is a great combination of brave, gung-ho and a bit left-footed which is quite a hard thing to pull off. I love what he has done with the character."

"But more than that, David and I worked quite closely as the first script was being shaped and written so he brought masses to the whole series. He was a great collaborator as all those early decisions about tone and story were being made. In fact many of the best ideas were his!"

Will we be seeing more of Tommy and Tuppence once this run is over? According to Walliams, that's up to us.

"We certainly hope there will be more Tommy and Tuppence adventures," he remarks. "There are more books to adapt and it's been a real pleasure filming these two stories. But ultimately, it's what the public think. If the public enjoy it, then I am sure there will be more. It has been a brilliant adventure so far..."



Jessica Raine and David Walliams star in Partners in Crime, Sunday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Food Unwrapped: Diets for Summer
Channel 4, 8pm

Jimmy Doherty, Kate Quilton and Matt Tebbutt reveal the latest scientific tips and ideas on how food can help people tone up their bodies. Jimmy goes on an east Asian adventure to look for the mystery ingredient in a new range of diet foods containing konjac noodles, which have no fat and virtually no calories, and also discovers that finding out the calorific content of alcohol isn't easy. Kate examines research suggesting eating nuts could help shed pounds rather than piling them on, while Matt investigates ways to hone biceps and abs.

tackles the behavioural problems of a whole new set of children and fretful parents." She begins in East Grinstead, West Sussex, where Susan and James Rogers are having trouble with three-year-old twins Alfie and Harry.

WEDNESDAY

The Day They Dropped The Bomb
ITV, 10.40pm

On August 6, 1945 the world changed forever, when a uranium gun-type atomic bomb (codenamed Little Boy) was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima by the US Air Force's Boeing B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay. Little Boy exploded 2,000 feet above the city, destroyed five square miles, and eventually killed in excess of 160,000 people. This documentary marks the 70th anniversary of the day the world's first atomic bomb was detonated, and features an in-depth account of what happened on that tragic day, through rarely seen archive footage and unique interviews with eyewitnesses. Also interviewed is Enola Gay navigator Theodore Van Kirk,

who was the last surviving member of the crew who dropped the bomb, before his death last year.

THURSDAY

The Holiday Airport: Sun, Sea & Scousers
Channel 5, 8pm

Grand National fever hits the airport as hundreds of excited race-goers pass through for the annual steeplechase.

A skateboarding crew from Herefordshire are en route to Barcelona, but when it turns out some of them have a fear of flying, it seems they might not get very far, while a woman who has lost more than eight stone fuels up at the airport restaurants and bars before flying out to Palma for the sporting challenge of a lifetime.



BBQ Champ, Friday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY
BBQ Champ
ITV, 9pm
For some people, a successful BBQ means that the burgers are only burnt on

the outside and no one goes home with food poisoning. But this new series, which could also have been called the Great British Grill Off, sees presenter Myleene Klass inviting a group of contestants to combine raw meat and fire to make something truly spectacular in the hope of being declared King or Queen of the BBQ. Each week, the hopefuls will be given two chances to impress judges Adam Richman of Man vs Food fame, and British chef and restaurateur Mark Blatchford as they take part in one challenge at BBQ HQ before heading off to another on location. This week, that means rustling up a dish that shows off their personality, before working together to create a barbecue buffet.

Ripper Street
BBC1, 9pm

There were howls of outrage in December 2013 when it was announced that there wouldn't be a third series of this gritty period drama. Luckily, the BBC listened, as they subsequently teamed up with Amazon Prime to revive the show. And now, for anyone who hasn't already watched it online, here's a chance to see why the fans wanted to keep it going, as the third season comes to the BBC. In this opening edition, the robbery of a goods train and a locomotive disaster on Leman Street leads Reid, Drake and Jackson to reunite after four years apart.

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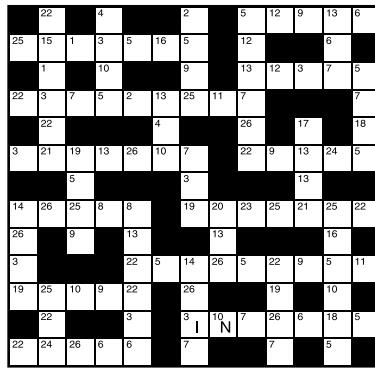
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

E	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	K	P
J	Y	Z	D	G	T	F	H	S	N	L	K	O	M	C

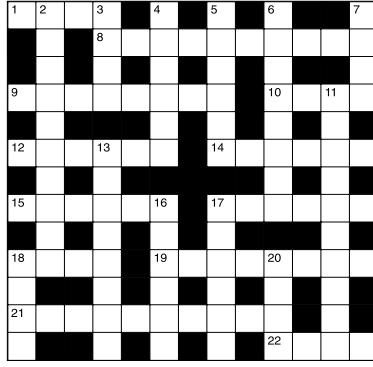
Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Come a cropper in the cropping season? (4)
2. Apropos the sign of possession... (10)
3. The French politician throws light on things (4)
4. Powerful ring given for article in 12 (6)
5. Averts disaster only to die of hunger (6)
6. Entertainment with nothing but a musical composition (8)
7. Master the rhythm? (4)
10. Shed players (4)
12. It's obvious father can camp (6)
14. Fearsome things almost - they can't be right! (6)
15. Didn't get the desired husband? (6)
17. Despises ship holding grain (6)
18. The weather they have at Spithead at present (4)
19. Flowers, perhaps (8)
21. Failed to notice being in somebody's view (10)
22. Favourites return at the interval (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Girl (4)
2. Disagreeing (2,8)
9. Footpath (8)
10. Not new (4)
13. Tread was pointing to the rising sun (8)
16. It may mean no treat when he treats! (6)
17. Match action taken by workers (6)
18. Tops up here (4)
20. The last things to associate with odds (4)

Down

3. Certain (4)
4. Mourn (6)
5. Raillery (6)
6. Light up (8)
7. Old (4)
11. Voters (10)
13. Building (6)
16. Company (6)
17. Believe (6)
18. Do business (4)
22. Humble (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

4	9	8	2	5	6	1	3	7
2	7	6	1	8	3	9	5	4
5	3	1	7	9	4	2	6	8
8	2	4	5	7	3	9	1	6
6	5	9	8	2	3	7	4	7
1	6	5	3	7	8	4	2	9
9	4	7	6	1	2	5	8	3
3	8	2	9	4	5	7	1	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 7 Image; 8 Ironing; 9 Handsaw; 10 Locum; 12 Large print; 15 Rolling sea; 18 Eight; 19 Ordinal; 21 Find out; 22 Amiss. Down: 1 Light verse; 2 Maine; 3 Pens; 4 Bigwig; 5 Collapse; 6 Circuit; 11 Metabolism; 13 Avant; 14 Elegant; 15 Anvil; 20 Draught; 21 Quill; 22 Touch; 3 Anemone; 7 Turnful; 10 Rider; 12 Settlement; 15 Evescent; 18 Yearn; 19 Uniform; 21 Classic; 22 Learn. Down: 1 Stationery; 2 Funny; 3 Chef; 4 Tablet; 5 Sturgeon; 6 Soldier; 11 Retirement; 13 Evenness; 14 Caravan; 16 Crutch; 17 Focal; 20 Idle.

Thinking space

Quiz

1. What nationality was detective writer Georges Simenon?
2. In what year was the St. Valentine's Day massacre?
3. What type of variety act was made popular by Edgar Bergen and Ray Alan?
4. Who was born first, Yoko Ono or John Lennon?
5. With which branch of science do you associate Copernicus?
6. Which agricultural pioneer invented the seed drill?
7. What was the real surname of American black muslim leader Malcolm X?
8. From which country did the U.S. buy Florida?
9. Of which country was Juan Peron the president?
10. What does RADAR stand for?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Violin; 2 22; 3 Franklin D Roosevelt; 4 Hiram Maxim; 5 New Zealand; 6 Capability; 7 Ruritania; 8 1983; 9 The first men's and women's public flushing lavatories; 10 Escoffier.
Niner: HYPOCRITE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

835 gives an animal,
91529 gives a large bird,
5362745 gives a baby bird.



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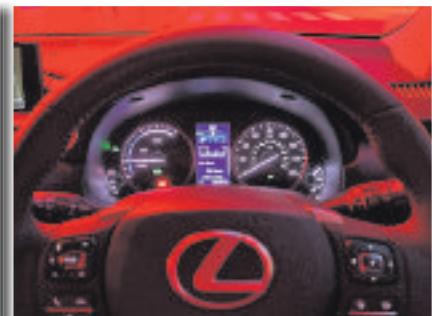
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Princesses transported in economical comfort to a magical land

By Matt Joy

In month two of driving the Lexus NX300h, Matt Joy puts it through its paces with a cross-channel trip to Disneyland Paris.

We live in a world dominated by speed. How fast your broadband is, how quickly your food arrives at your table and perhaps worst of all; how fast your car is. Even as someone who should technically be a responsible adult, I still get caught up in the big rush.

The Lexus NX300h is, by conventional measures, quick enough for modern driving with a top speed of 112mph and 0-62mph in 9.2 seconds, but in the last month, I've discovered one of its best qualities is how it makes me drive with calm restraint.

This is in part due to the cabin. You climb slightly up into the driver's seat, instantly giving you that commanding driving position which is why you would buy one in the first place. But the NX goes a step further, with a dashboard stacked so it sits up high with you, as well as a clever nod to the exterior in its shape.

Energy

Even the displays give you a gentle nudge in the right direction, if you wish. With the car in Sport mode there's a conventional rev counter illuminated in suitably racy red, but in Normal or Eco mode it instead indicates how efficiently you're driving. You can also bring up the energy flow meter between the dials or on the large screen, showing when the NX is running on petrol, electric or a combination. Competitive moron that I am, keeping it in EV mode for as long as possible becomes a game whilst remaining a good way of keeping emissions and consumption low.

Good consumption was on the priority list, however, for a family trek to Disneyland Paris. Normally I'd advocate a flight, but the NX had the right amount of room on board for two princesses (and me) and all the luggage that comes with that. There's also an argument that eight hours on motorways and autoroutes is still less stressful than 30 seconds in a UK airport in June.

And so it proved. Two four hour stints behind the wheel, even starting at 4.15am, were as easy as they could be on the driver thanks to the comfort on offer.

Better still, the radar-guided cruise control fitted to this luxury-spec model proved its worth yet again. Sure, you need to adapt your driving style slightly to keep things smooth, but do so and you're expending less effort than if you were taking full control yourself, and that pays off with less fatigue.

The excellent stereo system kept us entertained too, although I have yet to work out how to cancel the navigation announcements altogether; turning them down is fine, but the audio still pauses for an announcement that isn't there. My money is still on operator error, but if you will let Mickey Mouse behind the wheel...

TESTED

Lexus NX 300h Luxury, from £34,495

Engine: 2.5-litre petrol engine and electric motors, together producing 192bhp

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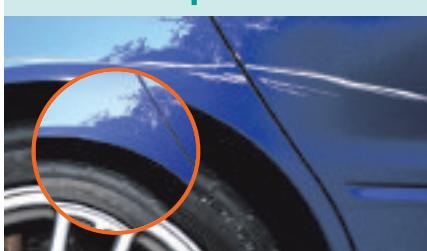
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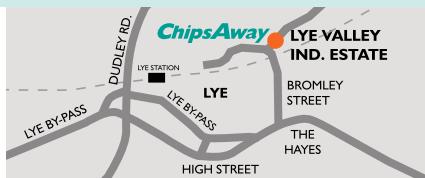


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DRIVETIME



Hyundai is 'best carmaker'

Hyundai Motor UK has been awarded 'Best Carmaker of the Year' at the 2015 Motor Trader Awards. This is the third time in six years that the accolade has been bestowed to the Company – it previously won in 2010 and 2011.

The Carmaker of the Year award, sponsored by Allianz Global Assistance, was voted for by a panel of judges who were impressed by Hyundai's continued delivery of customer care and dealer satisfaction, alongside its ever-changing product line-up and the introduction of a revolutionary way of buying these new products through Rockar Hyundai.

Curtis Hutchinson, editor, Motor Trader said: "For the third time in six years, Hyundai Motor UK has won Motor Trader's Carmaker of the Year Award in recognition of its sales success, desirable new models, focus on customer care and its close and profitable relationships with its dealer network."

Hyundai's expanded model range covers all the key market sectors and is one of the freshest looking line-ups in UK showrooms and the brand's results speak for themselves. The Company recorded best-ever sales of just over 82,000 in 2014 up 25 per cent since 2010 and this year is looking set to better that."

Tony Whitehorn said: "Hyundai has undergone something of a transformation in recent years. But that's not enough – we want Hyundai to grow

into something more in the hearts and minds of our customers. We can do this by continuing to offer more cars that people want to buy and by allowing them to buy them and care for them in a way that suits them. That's why it is so important to have a strong and transparent relationship with our dealer network."

In the short-term, Hyundai Motor UK is targeting 100,000 sales in the UK, with a medium-term goal of 5 per cent market share.

In the long-term, the company aims to secure a Top 5 sales position among all car brands in the UK.

Hyundai is also in the process of revamping its UK dealer network with a new showroom identity – designed to offer visitors an experience that matches the quality of the brand's new models.

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range (excl. Ampera): Urban: 12.7 (22.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban:

23.9 (11.8) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) - 88.3 (3.2), CO₂ emissions: 373 - 85g/km.*

Personal contract hire offer on Viva SE 1.0i 75PS in Solar Red, subject to availability and static. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £195.8, then 23 monthly rentals of £89. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 16,000 over 24 months charged at 5.50ppm. Personal contract hire offer on ADAM SLAM 1.2 70PS in Sovereign metallic paint with White/Mid Grey roof colour pack, subject to availability and static. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £2,000, then 23 monthly rentals of £145. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 16,000 over 24 months charged at 6.53ppm. Personal contract hire offer on New Corsa Excite 1.4 90PS a/c in Sovereign Silver, subject to availability and static. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £3,380, then 23 monthly rentals of £169. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 16,000 over 24 months charged at 6.64ppm. Excess charges also apply if you breach manufacturer servicing or maintenance guidelines or if the car exceeds BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age/mileage when it is returned to Vauxhall Leasing. Package includes Road Fund Licence and Vauxhall Assistance. Guarantee/indeemnity may be required. Prices and details are subject to change without notice. For full specification and Ts&Cs contact your local Retailer. You will not own the car. ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, BS16 3JA. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Offers available on orders or registrations between 2 July and 7 October 2015. #MPG figures are official test data and may not reflect real driving results. Offer applies to pre model year 2016 vehicles only. See Retailer for further details. Correct at time of going to press.

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5 Business & Farming

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8 Motoring

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TOYOTA AVGO 16,000 miles, red, five door, 2009, immaculate. £900. 07767 977617.

cars under £1500

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RENAULT CLIO W reg, electric windows, central locking, alloy wheels, sun roof, excellent condition, good runner. £750. o.n.o.
07749 106339.

RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE 1.6, 56 reg, 70,000 miles, metallic gold, 5-dr hatch, 2 owners from new, MoT April 2016, CD, CL, alarm, AC, £1,400.
07954 491953.

SKODA FABIA 1.4, silver, 5dr, MoT Feb 2016, good runner, £950. o.n.o.
07411 733865.

10 Skoda Octavia

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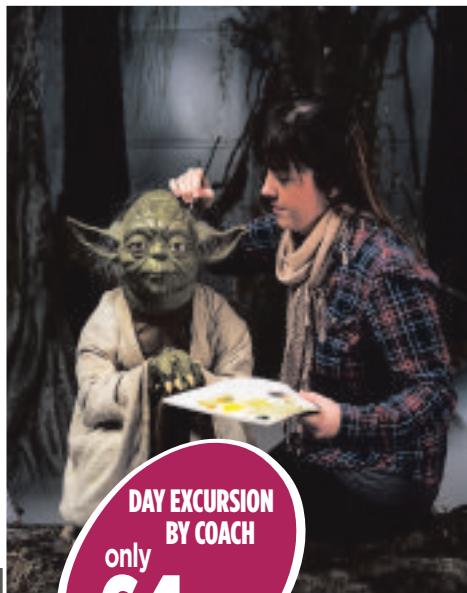
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Stour sides get mixed fortunes in matches

**Stourbridge 2nd XI 150 -10
Old Elizabethans 2nd XI 154-1
Old Elizabethans win by 24**

CARETAKER skipper, Matt Norgrave leading a weakened Stour side decided to bat first.

Stour lost openers Calum Littster and Areeb Mohammed cheaply.

Despite the efforts from youngsters Scott Ludlum (52), Tom Jennings (32), and skipper Norgrove (23) the score ended below par.

**Stourbridge 3rd XI 12-10
West Malvern 1st XI 186-9
West Malvern win**

Placed fifth in Division five (1st XI) of the Worcestershire league, Stour made the best from fielding a weakened side.

West Malvern skipper Steve Wright batted first and gave his side a sound start by posting 67 opening the batting.

He was eventually out caught off the bowling of skipper Dave Colesby.

A late 25 from Matt Penkoks batting at number six let the visitors into the game.

Japer Davidson a county junior prospect was the pick of the bowlers bagging four wickets for 42 off 10 overs.

Opener Steve Parker (25) and 22 from the County star Davidson were the main contributors but Stour fell well short of the target.

**Stourbridge 4th XI 225-3/West
Malvern 2nd XI 106-10
Stourbridge win**

Stour skipper, Dan Haywood earned the nickname of Jose Mourinho by beating a 2nd XI opposition fielding a weak Stour side with possibilities of topping Division Five (2nd XI) for the second time in three years.

New signing Coady loving life at Wolves

RECENT signing Conor Coady got his first 90 minutes of pre-season under his belt and declared – ‘I’m loving life at Wolves’.

The 22-year-old joined the club from Huddersfield earlier this month and has settled straight in at Molineux, featuring in all three of Wolves’ friendlies so far.

Coady is likely to be a key player for Wolves this season after starring for Huddersfield in the Championship last year.

And he said he was glad to play his first full game of the pre-season campaign in Wolves’ 1-0 win over Burton.

“It’s always needed to get that first 90 minutes under your belt and we can move on to next week now,” Coady said. “I loved the game, it was great.”



CRADLEY ace Arron Mogridge is looking to make up for lost time when he starts a busy August at reserve in the crucial clash with Birmingham.

Mogridge has suffered a sticky spell with a loss of confidence and will be relegated to the bottom two of the side by Ellis Perks.

He makes his first appearance in the crucial lower order slot against runaway leaders Birmingham on August 5.

Now he’s hoping to start piling up the points and play a crucial role as the Heathens chase National League glory.

Mogridge said: “It’s been a rough few

weeks for me, I’ve not been scoring very well and I’ve been well aware I’ve been underperforming.

“When you are struggling it takes its toll on your confidence, and it can be hard to get out of that so having a good meeting against Stoke was really important.

“I was making good starts, and I had four paid wins out of five which was exactly what I needed. I want to keep my confidence high now and keep scoring points. I definitely don’t want to go back to riding as I was because it certainly doesn’t feel great.

“It’s going to be tough, but hopefully I

can turn things around now and find some consistency again because that’s the main thing for me.”

Mogridge will also feature in the club’s prestigious individual event, the F.A.S.T Golden Hammer, at Perry Barr on August 12.

Birmingham star Adam Ellis will be one of the pre-meeting favourites along with Heathens skipper Max Clegg, Eastbourne’s new sensation Bradley Wilson-Dean, Wolverhampton’s Josh Bates and former Heathens favourite Ashley Morris. (Pic John Hipkiss)

Glassboys knocked out of cup contest

**Redditch United 2 Stourbridge 1
THE Worcestershire Senior Cup is being played as a pre-season tournament this season.**

And the cup game gave both sides their first taste of competitive action, even though the regular season is still almost a month away.

The first chance fell to the home side on five minutes, when some sloppy defending allowed Jordan Cullimaine-Liburd time to fire in a shot that cannoned off the outside of Charlie Price’s left-hand post.

But it was the Glassboys who opened the scoring after 14 minutes.

A reverse pass from Lee Chilton set Drew Canavan clear down the left and his cross picked out the onrushing Inshall in the middle who had the simplest task to nod the ball over the line.

The advantage last just three minutes though as Jamey Osborne curled a free-kick from just outside the penalty area against Price’s left-hand upright and rebounded across goal for Jordan Archer to steer home.

Diagonal

The Glassboys hit back almost immediately with a long diagonal free-kick from Leon Broadhurst on the left being headed down by Kristian Green at the back of the box for Smikle to push a low first-time shot inches wide.

However, it was Redditch, kicking down the slope, who were beginning to forge the better openings.

There was a close shave for the Glassboys on 53 minutes as Broadhurst got back to clear off the line from Archer, while Green went close for Stourbridge, his flicked header from another Tonks throw forcing substitute keeper Josh Moreton to claw the ball to safety.

Price was again called into action on the hour to turn a free-kick from Jamey Osborne round the post after sub Louis Harris had picked up a yellow card for a late challenge 25 yards from goal.

Broadhurst looked to have made a good challenge to halt Troy Baker on the left, but Baker persevered and his cross picked out substitute Luke Shearer who slotted the ball past Price Stourbridge play their first home friendly on Tuesday July 28 against Stafford Rangers.

Sykes enjoys success in rally



Stourbridge rally driver Sykes on the Nicky Grist Stages. Picture Nigel Pratt

STOURBRIDGE rally driver Richard Sykes enjoyed a very successful Nicky Grist Stages rally when he finished second two-wheel drive car and second in class.

Sykes gained the position in his Bathams Brewery, Broughbridge Marina, G I Sykes and Body Clinic-supported Citroën DS3.

The Llandover event was round three of the BTRDA Rally

Challenge and, after a disappointing retirement on the last round on the Isle of Man, Sykes was keen to get a good haul of points this time out.

The rally comprised two loops of four gravel stages featuring many of the roads used in Britain’s World Rally Championship round. Sykes was immediately on the pace, setting the second fastest time in his class on the opening

Monument stage. It was a position he was to maintain all day and he finished well ahead of the third in class competitor.

“I’m delighted with the result, it was vital that we scored plenty of points in the championship after the Manx retirement,” said Sykes. “We had a pretty faultless day really, the car was trouble free.”

“Emma Morrison navigated for me and she was brilliant all day.”

Stourbridge kick off season at Seasiders

THE Glassboys start their season at the seaside against Whitby Town on August 15 with their first home game three days later facing Nantwich. The full fixtures are:

August
15 Whitby Town A; 18 Nantwich Town H; 22 Workington H; 24 Ilkeston A; 29 Skelmersdale United A; 31 Rushall Olympic H;

September
5 Buxton A; 8 Barwell H; 19 Blyth Spartans H; 22 Ramsbottom United A; 29 Grantham Town H; October

3 Hyde United A; 6 Colwyn Bay A; 10 Matlock Town H; 13 Sutton Coldfield Town H; 17 Darlington A; 20 Ilkeston H; 24 Workington A; 27 Nantwich Town A

November
7 Whitby Town H; 21 Mickley Sports A; 28 Ashton United H

December
5 Salford City A; 12 Marine H; 19 Blyth Spartans A; 26 Halewood Town H; 28 Rushall Olympic A

January
2 Ramsbottom United H; 9 Stamford A; 16 Frickley Athletic H; 23 Skelmersdale United H; 26 Barwell A; 30 Hyde H

February
6 Grantham Town A; 13 Colwyn Bay H; 20 Matlock Town A; 23 Sutton Coldfield Town A; 27 Darlington H

March
5 Frickley Athletic A; 12 Stamford H; 26 Buxton H; 28 Halewood Town A

April
2 Ashton United A; 9 Mickley Sports H; 16 Marine A; 23 Salford City H

Tividale take Hayes down in friendly

**Heath Hayes 0 Tividale 2
HEATH Hayes gave as good as they got when they entertained EvoStik Division 1 Tividale.**

It might have been a different scoreline if it hadn’t have been for two fantastic saves from the Tividale keeper and a terrific shot from Ryan Burns blocked by a defender and Dan Scragg lifting the rebound over the bar.

Tividale took an early lead when the ball rebounded off a Hayes’ defender past Eden Taylor for an unfortunate own goal.

Tividale doubled their score when their centre forward was allowed to run freely through to beat Taylor.

Although Hayes matched Tividale they could not find that goalscoring touch needed to get something out of a match.



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McClean is told to shake off stigma

ALBION boss Tony Pulis has urged summer signing James McClean to shake off the 'stigma' surrounding him after holding talks about the winger's snub of the English flag.

Pulis held a meeting with McClean in the wake of the incident on the club's pre-season tour of America in which he refused to face the cross of St George during the national anthem.

And the Baggies boss has warned McClean, who is from a republican background in Northern Ireland, to protect his reputation after a career that has also seen him refuse to wear a Remembrance Day poppy out of respect for people killed on Bloody Sunday.

"Obviously there has been a stigma around him and he doesn't need to start that up again," said Pulis. "So hopefully we've nipped it in the bud and we can get on with our things and he can get on with his things."

"I didn't see the situation but I had a chat with him and explained what we do as a football club and the way we are and I think he's fine with everything."

"We've got Northern Ireland lads in the squad and he's been absolutely fantastic with them, and the way he's mixed and integrated with the group has been brilliant."

"I've seen the pictures and he's got to turn towards the flag like everybody else has and he recognises that."

"We want him to be as open and honest as he possibly can within the group and the group want to be as open and honest as they can with him. It's just about integrating him."

McClean opened the scoring with a strike in a 2-1 win at Richmond Kickers in the final game of the Baggies' trip.

Dicko does it with a single strike in friendly contest

Burton 0 Wolves 1

AS THINGS became decidedly unsettled off the field, the opposite was true for Wolves on it.

A regulation 1-0 victory, another clean sheet, some encouraging displays and 90 minutes under the belt for five players made this a successful day out for Kenny Jackett's team.

But with Wolves' squad still looking thin – even before James Henry's likely exit to Charlton – and Kevin McDonald's increasingly-ugly contract saga showing no signs of a conclusion, all is not rosy for Jackett.

McDonald's absence from the team, despite being named in the original squad for Wolves' first friendly on English soil this season, raised eyebrows before kick-off. And after the game Jackett confirmed McDonald was 'unsettled' and so had been left out.

After experimenting with a diamond formation in France, Jackett went 4-4-1 this time, but Afobe could pop up whenever he pleased.

His performance was the highlight of the afternoon. Afobe also created the game's only goal, feeding Nouha Dicko.

Glassboys knocked out of cup contest

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Mogridge looks to make up time

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Skipper helps side to winning draw

Old Elizabethans 1st XI 213-79 Stourbridge 250-6

Stourbridge winning draw

OLD Elizabethans are sixth in Division Two of the Birmingham and District Premier league. Stourbridge are still third from the bottom with 106 points.

Skipper Matt Bradley helped his side steer away from possible relegation by notching up a ton.

Stour recovered from an early blow losing the wicket of Alex Bingham caught and bowled by Liam Booth for six.

The recovery came through XI, Chris Norgrove

Cricket

and Matt Bradley. Overcoming early nerves, Norgrove battled to 32 when he was caught off John Major but the Stour total had moved on to 74 on a true batting track.

Thirteen runs later James Winders batting at number four was out, caught off Matt Davis for seven.

Skipper Bradley and Audy Alexander took the score from 87 to 206 in 18 overs. By that time Bradley had taken his score to 104 off 130 balls. Having given his side a sound platform Bradley

was caught off Matt Davis in the 48th over. Alexander increased the momentum in the final overs taking his score to 73no off 65 balls boosting Stour's confidence.

Not having their best bowling attack available Stour managed to take three wickets for 68 runs introducing the spin of Audy Alexander. James Boyle was caught driving off Jitesh Jivan-Patel for six, Damon Gariff was bowled by Audy Alexander for 27 and the No.3 John Major was caught behind off Jivan-Patel for 25 in the 22nd over.

Stour's next challenge will be division league leaders Bridgnorth at home starting midday.

● More results inside

McCarey is given ban but can play

WOLVES goalkeeper Aaron McCarey has vowed to make the most of his "second chance" now he is once again free to play.

The 23-year-old has been suspended for four months by the FA, after testing positive for a non-performance enhancing substance.

But with the ban backdated to April 21 – the date of the original suspension – and the rest suspended for two years, the shotstopper is once again available for selection and was due to make his return for the under-21s at Corby Town.

McCarey, who stated throughout he had not knowingly taken the substance, admits he feared at one stage his career might be over.

He said: "It is a second chance, if you like and I am really grateful to have it."

"At one point I thought my career was finished. It has been a long three months."

McCarey added: "I understand some fans will always have a question and maybe not believe I am saying."

And he said: "I'm sorry the good name of the club has been dragged into this situation but hopefully this will draw a line under it and we can move on."

The ruling followed an FA investigation following the failed test.

Wolves head coach Kenny Jackett said: "Aaron has maintained all along that he has no idea how the drug entered his system."

"Medical and scientific analysis, commissioned by the Professional Footballers' Association on behalf of Aaron, and including a hair follicle test requested by the player himself, also showed that the trace amount was very small and backed up Aaron's statement."

Himley Under-9s win soft ball title

HIMLEY Cricket Club is celebrating due to its Under-9s winning the North Worcestershire Softball title.

At the weekend Himley Under 9s won the title at Stourbridge cricket Club.

The Softball Competition started at the beginning of May with 20 teams entered on a group basis with the four qualifying group winners playing each other on Sunday. Their opponents were Enville CC, Ombersley CC and their own teammates as Himley had two teams in the top group.

Himley A won all three matches and the reserve team one game meaning the club finished first and third.

★★★

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Thursday, July 23, 2015

SAM THE SLAM TAKES THE TITLE

STOURBRIDGE'S Sam Eggington added the British welterweight title to his Commonwealth crown with a dominant stoppage victory over Glenn Foot, writes Craig Birch.

The two domestic rivals clashed on the big Matchroom Boxing bill at the Manchester Arena on Saturday night.

Needle between the two intensified at Friday's weigh in, where Foot stuck his head in Eggington's face. He wouldn't come out on top when they clashed again.

Foot was pulled out at the end of the eighth round with a gaping wound by his right eye, caused by an accidental head clash.

When the ring doctor ordered the contest couldn't continue, the bout had to go to the cards. All three judges went with Eggington and by some distance.

He said: "I'm buzzing, it was meant to be my hardest opponent yet and I made it look easy. I thought I controlled the fight."

"The belts I have won on the road have been great, but it's all been in the run up to the British title. It means so much to me."

Foot's intimidation tactics were still in place at the off, when he smacked his gloves against Eggington's forearms as the two touched up.

Tagging

He flew out of the blocks, too, tagging Eggington with a big right hand in the first round which only succeeded to wake him up.

Eggington bossed the second and kept him at range, although Foot fought back in round three as he lunged in with attacks.

That ploy was soon worked out by Eggington, who tagged him with right hands as he waded forward, setting up the left hook to the body.

Temper flared at the end of the fifth as Eggington, this time, butted heads with Foot as they retreated to their corners.

Then Foot came under fire in the sixth when he was trapped in the ropes with Eggington throwing hooks hell for leather, although he managed to duck down and escape.

There was no getting away from the venom of an evil left hook body from Eggington in the



Sam Eggington in the thick of the action against Glenn Foot at the Manchester Arena

seventh which left him hanging on for dear life, referee Steve Gray deducting a point for holding.

Combination punches were flying in and landing at will in the eighth, where the blood flow got the attention of the ringside doctor.

Despite Foot's protests, he was waved off. Knowing he was behind, he conceded defeat. The judges were almost in unison.

Howard Foster had it 80-71, a landslide taking into account the point off. Phil Edwards said 80-72, probably for a drawn first, while Terry O'Connor

nor almost certainly gave Foot the opener, 79-72. Eggington said: "It wasn't an early stoppage, but I felt like almost every round was mine. I knew he'd come out swinging, trying to knock me out with that big right hand."

"To be honest, he didn't hit as hard as people told me he would. He caught me in the first round, but it didn't shock or faze me. I just had to wake up."

"He got stung by a body shot and that got the ball rolling."

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